TENNYSON'S PRINCESS

Entered

THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY

BY

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

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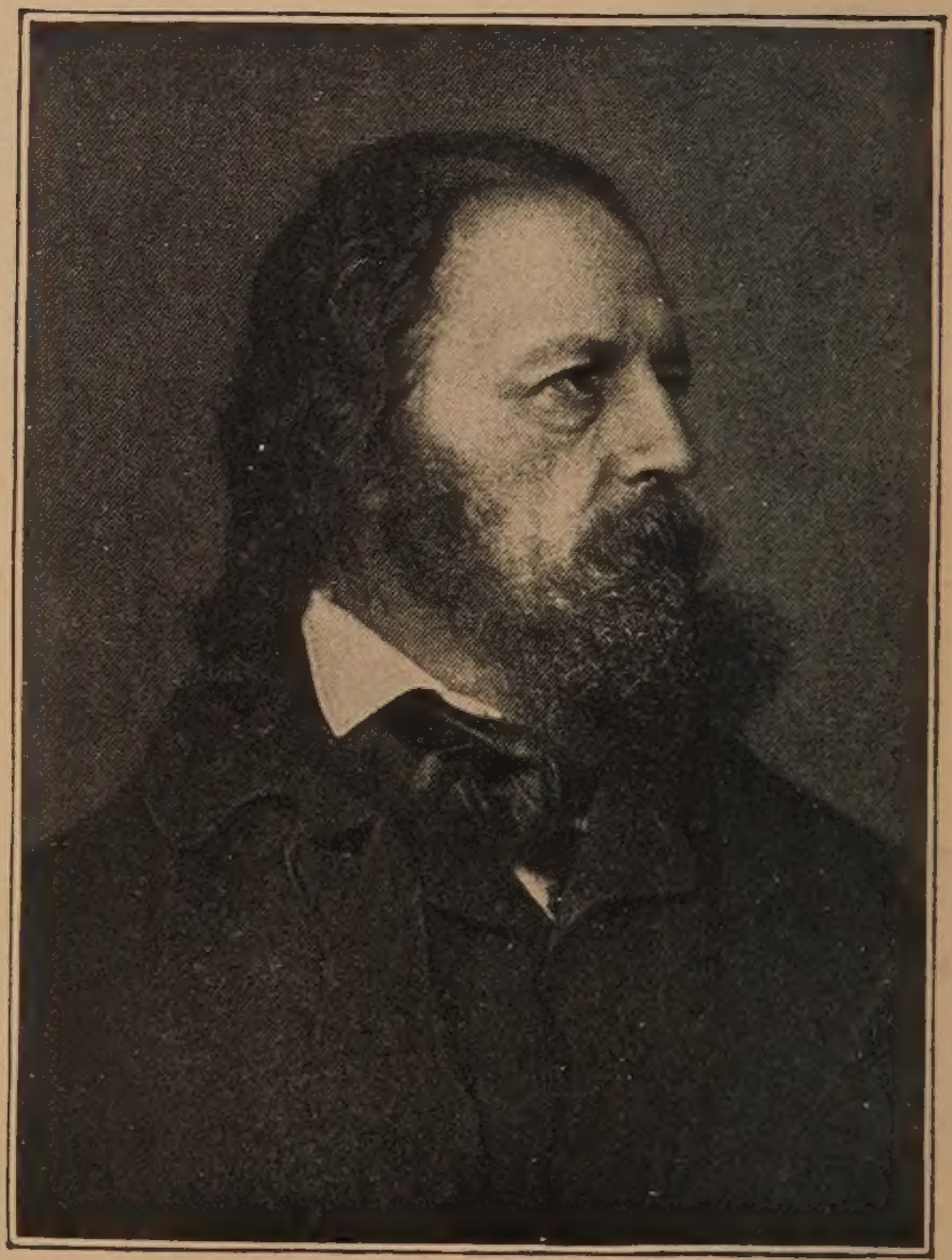

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ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

EDITED WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1916

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Set up and electrotyped November, 1898. Reprinted August, 1899; July, 1900; March, July, 1901; April, 1902; March, November, 1903; September, 1904; September, 1905; March, August, 1908; August, 1910; September, 1912; May, 1914; January, 1916.

INTRODUCTION

In the study of any work of art, whether it be a painting, a symphony, a novel or a poem, the main thing, of course, is the work itself. It is possible to enjoy and to appreciate "The Princess" without any knowledge of its author, and without any acquaintance with his other poems. Still, acquaintance with a man adds greatly to our interest in his work; and if Tennyson becomes something more than a name to us, if we can form in our minds a picture of him as a man, we shall find that our enjoyment of what he has written will be distinctly increased. Still more, if we can gain some knowledge of his characteristics as a writer, can learn wherein his skill as a poet consisted, so that we may discern these characteristics as we read, we shall find a higher pleasure than if we follow only the details of the story. And if we grasp the fact that through all of Tennyson's writing there runs a serious purpose, that he always had some higher end than simply to give pleasure, and that, while "The Princess" is to be read as a beautiful

poem and an interesting story rather than as a moral lesson, it none the less breathes a deeper purpose, and that beneath the beauty of language and verse is a great underlying truth, — if we grasp this, we shall find that our enjoyment is increased rather than lessened, and that we have gained a clearer appreciation of the truth that poetry is something more than a mere pastime, and that a poem is not simply the amusement of an idle hour.

For these reasons, therefore, it is desirable, in connection with our reading of "The Princess," to gain some knowledge of the facts of its author's life and of his personality; to learn something of his work and of his rank as a poet, to ascertain the reasons why he is thought worthy to hold that rank; to discover the purpose that he had in view when he wrote this poem, and to search for the secret of its charm and power.

I. TENNYSON THE MAN

Alfred Tennyson was born on the 6th of August, 1809, in the rectory of the little village of Somersby, in Lincolnshire, England. His father was a clergyman of more than usual culture and education, and his mother was a woman of rare sweetness of character. Receiving, as he did, nearly all of his early education

at home, he owed much to his fortunate parentage. In later years he paid more than one tribute to his mother, and it is understood that the beautiful lines in the last part of "The Princess" (vii., 298–312) were written with her in mind. Alfred was one of twelve children, and it is said that owing to his shyness he was not the most attractive of the twelve.

He attended school for a year or two in the neighboring village of Louth, but except for that absence his entire boyhood was spent at home. There can be little question that this quiet, retired life in a scholarly household, amid the beautiful Lincolnshire scenery, did much to develop in him the fondness for books and the love of nature that were so characteristic of him in later life.

His fondness for poetry and his ability to write verse were shown when he was very young. At the age of ten or eleven he conceived a great admiration for Pope's translation of the *Iliad* and wrote hundreds of lines in the "regular Popeian metre." He said himself that he was even able to improvise them. At twelve Scott had become his model, and he composed an epic of six thousand lines in the manner of Sir Walter. A year or two later he had completed a drama in blank verse.

In 1827, when he was eighteen, he and his older brother Charles published the little volume, that has

since become famous, *Poems by Two Brothers*. While the poems are not without merit, the reputation of the book is due not to its own excellence, but to the fact that it contains the first published work of one who was afterward to become the greatest poet of his time.

In 1828, the two brothers, Charles and Alfred, entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Both were retiring by nature, and their life in the great university was almost as quiet and uneventful as it had been in the little country village. Alfred did not take what could be called a prominent position at Cambridge, but his ability and his attractiveness as a man were recognized. His friends were not numerous, but they were of the best men in the university, and they were bound to him by the strongest ties. Among the most notable of these friends were Arthur Henry Hallam, Richard Monckton Milnes (afterward Lord Houghton), Richard Chenevix Trench (afterward Archbishop of Dublin), James Spedding, F. D. Maurice, Henry Alford, and Charles Merivale — all men whose names still live by reason of their own achievements. Thackeray was also in Cambridge at the same time with Tennyson, but they do not appear to have been thrown together.

All this time he was busy with his poetry. He frequently read his productions to the members of the little club or society known as "The Apostles," the understanding always being that no criticisms or

comments were to be made. In 1829 he won the "Chancellor's Prize" for the best poem on the rather unpromising subject, "Timbuctoo." It is not a remarkable work, but it is possible to discover in it traces of the power that was later developed. In 1830, while he was still a student, appeared his first real volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical.* This little book attracted immediate attention, and some of the poems — "Mariana," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and others — are still cherished as among his better work. In 1831, owing to his father's death, he left Cambridge without taking a degree, and determined to devote his life to the pursuit of poetry.

In 1833 occurred the great sorrow of the poet's life, the death of Arthur Henry Hallam. He was Tennyson's closest friend, and a man of whom he said that he was "as near perfection as mortal man could be." It is fair to say that the loss of his friend Hallam affected Tennyson more profoundly than any other event in his whole life.

After Hallam's death Tennyson settled in London and devoted himself to his writing. From that time the story of his life is simply a record of growth — of growth in poetic power, and in the recognition of that power by the world. For nearly ten years he published little, although he was writing steadily. In 1842 he atoned for his long silence by giving to the

world two volumes of *Poems*. Among the new poems in these volumes were "The Talking Oak," "Locksley Hall," "Ulysses," and "Break, break, break." In 1845, Sir Robert Peel placed his name on the Civil List for a pension of £200 a year. Up to this time Tennyson had been seriously hampered by the lack of money, but now, thanks to the pension and the increasing income from his writings, his pecuniary troubles were practically ended.

In 1847, "The Princess" appeared. 1850 was the most notable year of the poet's life, for in that year, at the age of forty, almost exactly midway between his birth and death, he was married, published "In Memoriam," and was made Poet Laureate of England. It is worthy of note that the marriage of Alfred Tennyson and Emily Sellwood was the culmination of an engagement that had virtually lasted for thirteen years. They had become engaged during the time of his early struggles in London, but as poetry was not proving a lucrative occupation, and as there was no visible prospect of his being able properly to provide for a wife, all communication between the two was forbidden. For ten years the prohibition was in force, but at last success was achieved and the poet was able honorably to renew his suit.

In 1853 Tennyson moved to Farringford in the Isle of Wight. It is with this place that his name is

especially associated, although he later owned another, Aldworth, in Surrey, and divided his time between the two. At intervals during the later years of his life appeared "Maud," "Idylls of the King," his various dramas, and a number of shorter poems. In 1865 he refused a baronetcy, but in 1883, after considerable hesitation, he accepted the offer of a peerage, and early in the following year was made Baron of Aldworth and Farringford.

He died at Aldworth on the 6th of October, 1892, at the age of eighty-three, after a life singularly quiet and apart from the bustle of the world, but a life peculiarly complete and well-rounded. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Such is the bare record of the facts of Tennyson's life. We are not so much concerned with these facts, however, as we are with the man himself, with his personality. What we wish to know is not when he was born and died, nor where he lived, but what sort of man he was; we wish to see him, as nearly as may be, as he was in life; we wish to become acquainted with him, to learn the traits and characteristics that are reflected in his works and that will throw light upon them. Before speaking of some of these traits, however, there are two points clearly brought out even in such a brief summary of his life as has been given here.

The first of these points is the constancy of his devotion to one end. Poetry was the end and aim of his life. He began to write it when he was but eight years old; it was the absorbing pastime of his youth, the occupation of his manhood, and the solace of his old age. We find no record of any question as to what his calling in life should be; it seems to have been taken for granted, by him and by his friends, that he was foreordained to be a poet. When the burden of self-support was laid upon him, and even when his engagement roused in him the desire for pecuniary independence, there seems to have been no thought of attaining it in any other way than by increased devotion to his art. He was not a narrow man. His interests in life were many, but all of these interests were subordinated to one end. He studied science, and history, and philosophy, and politics, but only that he might thereby make his poetry richer and deeper and truer. The story of his life is the story of an almost religious devotion to one end, of a rarely equalled constancy of purpose.

Besides showing this constancy of purpose the story of Tennyson's life clearly reveals the fact that the fulness of his poetic power was attained only after long growth and development. This is not to say that he did not possess innate poetic genius. The boy who at ten or eleven could write such verses as he did was

no ordinary child; the college student who could write the "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" was no commonplace undergraduate; and no man who did not have born in him genius of the highest order could ever fit himself by any course of training to write "In Memoriam" or the "Idylls of the King." That Tennyson possessed genius of a high order is evident from a study of his early works, but a study of his whole work makes it equally evident that this genius attained its full fruition only as the result of slow development. There is to be found in his work a steady increase of technical skill. Facility in verse making he had as a boy, but skill in the use of his tools, that is, in the handling of words and metre, grew by practice and toil. Still more marked is the growth in the real, underlying power of his poetry. Some of his earlier poems are among his most charming and delightful, but it is in the work of his manhood that we must look for that which shall fully measure the height and depth of his power.

Recognition of this constancy of purpose, and of this steady growth and development of power, is fundamental to any true knowledge of Tennyson. There are also, however, certain strongly marked traits or characteristics, acquaintance with which makes the man stand out more clearly before our eyes, and thus makes his poetry more easily intelligible.

The first of these traits to impress one is his love of seclusion, and his dislike of anything like a formal social function. This does not mean that he disliked people, or that there was anything disagreeable or surly in his nature. Exactly the opposite was true. He disliked a crowd and he hated the empty formalities of society, but he enjoyed nothing more than the companionship of his friends. He liked nothing better than free, unrestrained intercourse with congenial companions, and those who were admitted to his intimacy speak with enthusiasm of the charm of his manner and the fascination of his talk. But he had no time to waste on those who sought him out of mere curiosity, and no enjoyment of a crowd.

As has been said, this aversion to society was not due to anything disagreeable in his nature; it was due mainly to two causes. The first of these was his shyness, for he was extremely, almost painfully, shy. This was strongly marked in his boyhood, and he never outgrew it. Of course, as he saw more of people and of the world, and as his own consciousness of power grew, his timidity was lessened, but it never fully passed away.

The second reason for his love of seclusion was unquestionably the fact that he possessed independent resources of enjoyment and of work. There are some natures that need the stimulus and spur of

association with others to rouse them to effort or to give zest to their pleasure. This was not the case with Tennyson. His own high purpose was a sufficient incentive to work; his greatest sources of pleasure were books and nature, and he needed no companionship to enable him to enjoy these. He was fond of his friends and he liked to share his pleasures with them, but he was a man who preferred his own society to that of indifferent companions.

Now this shyness produced, as it frequently does, a certain sort of mannerism, and this independence of mind brought about not infrequent fits of abstraction and absent-mindedness, so that it is not strange that many who met him casually thought him brusque and even rude in manner. To this was added a blunt honesty that often scorned the ordinary polite conventionalities. His reply to the Duchess of Argyll, when she asked if he could not be persuaded to attend a literary breakfast at her house, "I should hate it, Duchess," was perfectly understood by her; but to one who did not know him it must have seemed unpardonably rude. But this apparent brusqueness was after all only on the surface, and when one had broken down the barrier of his reserve and had fairly been admitted to his intimacy, he was found to be the most delightful of companions, the truest of friends.

The love of seclusion was probably the first trait

that one would notice in Tennyson, but it would not be possible to remain long in his society without being impressed also by his strong love of nature. Probably the sea appealed to him more than any other natural object, and has affected more strongly his poetry, but his enjoyment of natural beauty and his love of it were most catholic. Nor was it simply an admiration for the beautiful in nature; it was an intense enjoyment that permeated his whole being and filled his whole soul. His knowledge of natural objects was remarkable. Bayard Taylor, who visited him at Farringford and walked with him, was "struck with the variety of his knowledge. Not a little flower on the downs, which the sheep had spared, escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, was perfectly familiar to him. I thought of a remark I once heard from the lips of a distinguished English author (Thackeray) that 'Tennyson was the wisest man he knew,' and could well believe that he was sincere in making it." This keenness of observation, this breadth of knowledge, and this intense enjoyment of nature are clearly reflected in his poetry.

His love for nature was almost, if not quite, equalled by his fondness for books and reading. That which would most impress one, however, was not so much his fondness for study and reading as the extent and variety of his knowledge. He was not merely a reader,

but a systematic student, and the range of his studies was a broad one. Literature naturally held first place, and he was well versed in the best of all times and all countries. Philosophy appealed to him strongly, he showed a deep interest in politics, and he followed closely the best scientific thought of the day. The following schedule of a week's work drawn up by the poet in 1834, and printed in Hallam Tennyson's *Life* of his father, is very suggestive in this connection: —

Monday: History, German.
Tuesday: Chemistry, German.
Wednesday: Botany, German.
Thursday: Electricity, German.
Friday: Animal Physiology, German.
Saturday: Mechanics.
Sunday: Theology.
Next week: Italian in the afternoon.
Third week: Greek. *Evenings:* Poetry.

It is easy to believe that his reputation for broad learning rested on a secure foundation.

Besides his love of seclusion, his fondness for nature, and his broad learning, there was a fourth trait that could not fail to impress any one who knew him. That was his belief in himself. He took himself and his work seriously. Poetry was to him no pastime; it was the most important thing in life. He regarded

the poet as an interpreter, as a revealer, of truth — nay, even as a prophet. He believed that he himself had a special message to deliver to the world. To the delivery of that message in the best possible manner he devoted his life and his powers. He believed that he could succeed, and he knew when he had succeeded.

Tennyson was too bluntly honest, too careless of conventionalities, to conceal this faith in himself. His frankness often caused him to be misunderstood, and it must be confessed that his self-confidence sometimes assumed rather absurd forms. He would display as much enthusiasm over a fine line of his own as over one of Shakespeare's or Milton's. He could say calmly to a friend, "Come, and I'll read you 'Maud'; you'll never forget it." And yet that was not conceit; it was the simple truth, and Tennyson knew it. Those who knew him only casually, regarded it as a weakness, but they were wrong. What would have been an evidence of affectation and conceit in a little soul, in a great one was simply a proof of sincerity and simplicity. It was a proof of his greatness of mind that he rose above the consideration of how his words would impress those about him, and thought only of the fact. He was concerned with what the world would think of his poetry, not with what it might think of him.

This faith in himself, also, was one of the reasons for his success. It is always so. The man who has too exalted an opinion of his own powers is quite likely to fail, either because he attempts too much, or because he believes that his ability relieves him from the necessity of exertion. But the man who, with a knowledge of his powers and of his limitations, and with a realizing sense of the greatness as well as of the importance of his task, sets himself to its fulfilment with the confidence of self-knowledge, and with the patience and perseverance that can endure toil and discouragement, he it is that succeeds. What man has ever achieved any great thing in the world, who has not had an absorbing faith in the value of the task before him, and a simple confidence in his own ability to perform it? So it was with Tennyson. To him the work of the poet was the highest to which man could be called; he knew that he was endowed with the capacity to do that work; and this confidence was one of the main reasons why he succeeded.

This faith in himself, then, as has been said, was one of his most striking characteristics, and it was at the same time one of the strongest points in his character. Men sometimes smiled at its manifestations, and thought the poet vain; but when they came to know him better they found that it was not vanity, but simply the blunt honesty of a man devoted to one

end in life, regarding his work as of far more importance than himself, and knowing perfectly that he had succeeded in that work. Now when a man has succeeded in a great undertaking by his own exertions, we can forgive him, even though we smile, if he sometimes fails to conceal the consciousness of his success.

Such was the man. A striking figure, as Carlyle described him, with "a great shock of rough, dusky dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate;" living a life apart from the bustle of the world, with a few tried friends, his books, nature and his own thoughts, he realized most closely, in appearance and in life, our ideal of a poet.

II. TENNYSON'S WORK AND ART

One of the first points to be noticed in regard to Tennyson's work is its unevenness. Considerable stress should be laid upon this, for a realization of it is important in forming an estimate of the poet. Many persons happen upon some of his weaker poems and are repelled. They find comparatively slight evidence of power and feel that he cannot be a great poet. They even find positive defects that appear to overbalance whatever merits they may discover. Now this

method of judgment when applied to poetry is radically wrong. A poet is to be judged by his most successful work, not by that which falls short of his normal standard. He may have written a great deal that is arrant nonsense, or worse, but if he has, in addition, done some work that is really fine, we judge him by that and ignore the other. This is precisely the case with Tennyson. The slow and steady development of his poetical power has already been spoken of. It would be manifestly unfair to base an estimate of the work of the Laureate on the ambitious drama that he wrote at fourteen; it is equally unfair to judge him by the experiments of his young manhood or by the efforts of his less inspired hours in later life.

It is important, then, to note the fact that Tennyson's work was uneven and that a not inconsiderable portion of it may be called distinctly unsuccessful. Some of his early poems are weak technically — at least, as compared with the consummate art of his later work; more are labored and artificial, without real life and inspiration, and some of his later verse is decidedly poor. Some even of his more famous poems fall short when judged by the strictest standards. This weaker work is to be ignored in forming an estimate, and our judgment of the poet should be based only on that which may fairly be regarded as his best work.

There are certain poems in regard to which the opinions of critics are divided — for example, "Maud" and "The Princess." Leaving these out of consideration, it is probably fair to say that Tennyson's best work is comprised in three groups of poems. The first of these groups includes some of his shorter poems — the "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" with its picture of

> the golden prime
> Of good Haroun Alraschid;

the ever charming "Miller's Daughter"; "The Lotos-Eaters," breathing the very spirit of the land

> In which it seemed always afternoon;

the stirring ballad of "The Revenge"; the unequalled and inimitable "Charge of the Light Brigade"; the noble "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington"; and that other most characteristic poem, "Locksley Hall," to which more than to any other single poem, it has been said, Tennyson owes his hold on the hearts and minds of men in this nineteenth century. It would easily be possible to enlarge this list, but it is not necessary, except to mention his songs. Tennyson was preëminently successful in this line, and some of his songs may fairly be ranked as the finest in our language since the days of Shakespeare. Some of these songs were published separately, but more of them, perhaps, were inserted

in his longer poems, notably "The Princess," "Maud," and the "Idylls of the King." When we think of such songs as "Break, break, break," "Crossing the Bar," that exquisitely beautiful cradle-song,

> Sweet and low, sweet and low,
> Wind of the western sea,

and, finest of all, the "Bugle Song,"

> The splendor falls on castle walls
> And snowy summits old in story,

— when we think of these, we have a firm basis on which to form an estimate of Tennyson's power. These songs will live. If Tennyson had written nothing more than a half dozen of the songs, and the poems that have been named above, his fame would be secure.

Some of his short poems and songs, then, may be said to make up the first group of Tennyson's successful poems. The second includes those one hundred and thirty-one short poems written in memory of Arthur Henry Hallam, and known as "In Memoriam." Arthur Hallam was Tennyson's closest friend, who called out his deepest admiration and love, and whose death was the great sorrow of the poet's life. "In Memoriam" is the record of his grief over the loss of his friend. Each of the short poems embodies a pass-

ing mood or phase of that grief, and together they form a connected record of his most sacred thoughts and feelings extending over a period of seventeen years. The work as a whole is overweighted. There is too much of it for the subject. It is emphatically not a work to be read at a single sitting, but two or three poems at a time as the mood happens to strike one. When read thus it cannot fail to make a profound impression. In it Tennyson has taken that well-known metre, so familiar to us in our hymns, and carried it to the highest point of perfection that has yet been attained in our literature; he has displayed a marvellous power of expressing profound thought in exquisitely perfect language, and he has put into words some of the deepest feelings and emotions that stir the hearts and minds of men of this time. It is this power of expressing great truths in perfect language that has filled our modern literature with quotations from "In Memoriam"; it is because of this that men have turned and are turning to it to find the voicing of those emotions that they feel and know, but cannot put into words; and it is this that has made it what it has so truly been called, "the most influential poem of the nineteenth century."

Greatest of all his works, however, are the "Idylls of the King." In these Tennyson has taken the legends of King Arthur as they are told by old

Geoffrey of Monmouth and Sir Thomas Malory, has clothed them with all the charm of chivalry, with all the fascination of romance, and with a glamour that is purely Tennysonian, has adorned them with the utmost grace of language and the highest splendor of verse and description, and has woven the whole into a completed epic that stands as the greatest narrative poem in our language since the time of Milton. The style is a rare union of strength and delicacy; at times we are borne along with a power and majesty that are irresistible, and again the verse flows with exquisite tenderness; nowhere is his descriptive power more marked; and the stories are told with entrancing skill.

But the real secret of the greatness of the "Idylls" lies deeper than this: it lies in the fact that Tennyson has done something more than tell charming stories with delightful skill. King Arthur is a noble soul, striving to live blamelessly in the world and to uplift those about him. Into his court comes a sin, — the guilty love of Launcelot and Guinevere, — and that sin, spreading and involving others, finally brings to ruin the whole fabric of the Round Table that had been built up with such infinite pains. The "Idylls" are not an allegory, and they were not written for the purpose of preaching a sermon or of teaching a lesson. But they contain a distinct allegorical element, and it is impossible to read them carefully without feeling

that beneath the surface is a great underlying truth. The "Idylls" charm us if we seek only pleasure in the reading, but when we grasp this deeper meaning, — the struggle of a brave soul to live purely and to uplift humanity, the conflict of man with sin, the terrible ruin wrought by sin, in fact, the great problem of civilization, — when we grasp this deeper meaning, they stand out as one of the great poems of the world.

Tennyson has written much besides these that is fine, some things, perhaps, that may fairly be called great, but it is upon these three groups — some of his shorter poems and songs, "In Memoriam," and the "Idylls of the King" — that any sound estimate of his power must be based. The question now naturally arises, what is it in these works that constitutes their power? What are the elements of strength that we shall discover when we come to analyze them? It is not necessary for us to enter into an exhaustive analysis of Tennyson's art, but if we examine these works closely, we shall discover three elements of power, and it is on these that his claim to greatness chiefly rests.

The first element of strength that one notices is his matchless literary workmanship. The word "matchless" is used advisedly, for as a literary artist, as a skilful handler of the tools of his trade, Tennyson is preëminent and almost without a rival. His skill is

particularly noticeable in two respects — his command of words and of metre.

His diction is remarkable. The number of words at his command is astounding, and seems almost without limit. But it is not so much the extent of his vocabulary that impresses us as his skill in using the words at his command, the way in which he chooses just the right word to express the exact meaning intended, and the judgment with which he selects the kind of word that will enhance the effect that he desires to produce. We need not go outside of "The Princess" for proof of this power. Take some of the songs between the parts; for example, "Sweet and low" and "Ask me no more." Notice the absolute simplicity of the language — in the latter only six of the one hundred and twenty-five words contain more than one syllable — and what an effect of tenderness in the one and of solemnity in the other is produced by the use of these short, simple, familiar words. Now compare with these such a line as that famous one,

> Laborious orient ivory, sphere in sphere;

or such a passage as the following: —

> A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
> With scraps of thundrous epic lilted out
> By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies

> And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
> That on the stretched forefinger of all Time
> Sparkle for ever;

or those three remarkable lines,

> Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees;

or those others, with their Miltonic roll,

> While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
> Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
> A long melodious thunder to the sound
> Of solemn psalms and silver litanies.

Contrast these, and you have done enough to prove Tennyson's power of choosing the right kind of word to produce a desired effect.

Another evidence of Tennyson's command of words is his ability to express a great truth in a concise, epigrammatic form that has almost the form of a proverb. Many of these have passed into our stock of familiar quotations: —

> He makes no friend who never made a foe.

> A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.

> And God fulfils himself in many ways
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

But it is unnecessary to quote more. One has simply to open a volume of Tennyson at random and to read a page with this thought in mind to be convinced of his marvellous command of words.

His metrical skill is no less marked. This, however, is too technical a subject to be proved by off-hand citations, or to be discussed here with any degree of fulness. Still it is easy, without entering into technicalities, to convince oneself of his skill in handling metre. Turn to the "Idylls of the King" and "In Memoriam." Notice in the one how splendidly he has handled the blank verse, and in the other to what a point of perfection he has carried the familiar hymnal metre. Then turn to almost any of the shorter poems or songs in more unusual metres. Read them aloud, noting the swing of the verse and the lilt of the lines. You have done enough to prove to the ordinary mind Tennyson's command of metre, and for the rest one may well be content to accept the testimony of those whose technical training best fits them to judge. Tennyson's perfection of workmanship, then, as shown especially in his command of words and of metre is the first element of his strength; and it is impossible to study this technical excellence and to notice how it is always subordinated to the

higher ends of poetry, without being impressed by the devotion that counted no pains too great, no labor too toilsome that would make more perfect the expression of the message that he felt called to deliver.

And the second element of strength is his splendid descriptive power. This is exactly what we should expect to find in a man with such an intense love of nature, possessing such a power of keen observation, and endowed with such a remarkable faculty of expression. The range of this power seems to be almost unlimited. It makes little difference whether he is describing the sea in storm or calm; the peaceful beauty of a country landscape, or the bare sweep of a desolate moor; whether he is describing the lowly cottage of a humble laborer, or the "lordly pleasure-house" he built his soul,

Wherein at ease for aye to dwell;

whether he is picturing the scene before his eyes, or that country of the "Idylls" that existed only in his imagination — whatever the subject, each is drawn with the same certainty of touch, the same clearness of outline. And it is just so with his descriptions of men and events; each stands out with the same distinctness and the same vivid sense of reality.

He seldom goes minutely into details in his descriptions, but he has the faculty of selecting just those

details that are most important and that will make the object or the place stand out before our eyes. He has great power of suggesting a scene, and with very few words is able to construct for us an elaborate picture.

This power of description was constantly and freely used. Indeed, it may be said that Tennyson's poetry is eminently pictorial. He displays his suggestive power in the striking and vivid figures that are so abundant in his verse, and his poems are crowded with rich and varied pictures. One can hardly read a page at random without being struck by the wealth of description. "The Princess" is a capital illustration of the truth of this, and it also contains some of his finest descriptions. One point, however, should be noticed and emphasized. Tennyson seldom, if ever, introduces a description for its own sake. There is always a deeper purpose, and the picture is used to illustrate some thought that he is trying to impress, or, as a background, to intensify some effect that he wishes to produce. "The Princess" is crowded with examples of this, and it is seen clearly in "Locksley Hall," where the landscape mirrors so perfectly the mood of the hero of the poem.

His technical skill and his descriptive power, then, are the two characteristics that first impress one in a study of Tennyson's verse. They, however, are not

sufficient by themselves. A man may possess both qualities in high degree and yet fall far short of writing true poetry. The ability to write verse is easily acquired; any one of fair capacity can attain a moderate degree of skill with comparatively little effort, and when once attained it is easy to grind out machine-made verse by the yard. But it is not poetry. Poetry is something deeper and more worthy than that. The poet is one who, with clearer vision and truer insight than are granted to ordinary mortals, looks out upon the world about him, up to God, and down into his own soul, reads there the hidden meanings, and proclaims them to the world in poetic form. It is not enough that he has a high purpose, or even that he utters great truths. He may teach noble lessons, but if his work is not clothed in worthy artistic form, he is no true poet. So, too, if the verse embodies the very perfection of art, if it charms us with its grace, or dazzles us with its splendor, but carries no deeper message to touch our hearts, kindle our imaginations, or rouse us to action, it is empty and vain. The great poet is he who utters great truths and noble thoughts in worthy artistic form.

There are, then, two elements to be considered in the work of every poet — his message and his art. We have seen the perfection of Tennyson's art, but the real secret of his power lies deeper than that; it is to

be found, not in the excellence of his verse, nor in the splendor of his descriptions, but in the truth and nobility of his message. It was a twofold message — a message of progress and a message of faith.

Tennyson was a believer in progress. He was no pessimist. He saw the discouragements and the obstacles, the countless ills and evils that hem men in on every side. They pressed hard on him, but did not overwhelm him, for he also saw at work the forces that he knew must ultimately prevail for good. The reason why men gain courage and inspiration from Tennyson is that while he saw clearly and realized fully all the discouraging surroundings he yet uttered a clear call of hope. It was not a cry of despair to rouse and save ourselves from ruin, it was a cry of faith and courage. The world is moving; let us, too, move with it.

> Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward, let us range,
> Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.

He believed in progress for the individual and for the race. He believed

> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

He believed that the race was advancing and the world growing better. Affairs were not governed by blind chance. He held that

> Thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs.

He looked beyond the struggles and conflicts of the present

> Till the war-drum throbbed no longer and the battle-flags were furled
> In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

And he saw that there was

> one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

But while Tennyson was a believer in progress, it was in an orderly progress. To his mind the universe was not governed by blind chance, but was in the hands of an Almighty Power. All things were subject to Law, and progress was possible only in conformity to Law. He was, therefore, opposed to revolution. He did not believe that it was feasible to advance by simply overturning the existing state of affairs. In that sense of the word he was conservative. But he believed most emphatically that it was feasible and even necessary to advance steadily. He

saw that the law of the world was progress, and that it was the duty and privilege of men to live in conformity with that law and to aid in its fulfilment. In that sense of the word he was distinctly progressive. His creed in regard to progress is clearly outlined in "The Princess," where he so emphatically ridicules the idea of attempting to change the position of woman by any revolutionary means, and shows that the only way for her to attain the highest possibilities of development is by working in strict conformity with nature, and by slow steady progress through a long period of time.

Tennyson's message was one of progress. It was also one of faith. He was a man who thought for himself, and when he was confronted with the great problems of religion he grappled with them manfully; he went through all the struggle of an honest doubt, and he emerged with a triumphant faith. "In Memoriam" is the record of his religious struggle, and of his religious belief. It would be difficult to formulate Tennyson's creed, if indeed he had a creed, but it is impossible to mistake his faith in the great fundamentals of religion — God, immortality, and the ultimate triumph of right. It is not the fact that he had faith that gives him his hold upon men. It is because he did not accept his beliefs at second-hand; because he faced and worked out for himself the great prob-

lems of religion; and because he has recorded his solution of those problems in a form that helps and inspires those who read.

Tennyson's technical skill would by itself give him a high place as a literary artist; his splendor of description and his brilliancy of imagery would make his verse a perpetual delight; but it is to the truth and nobility of what he taught, to his message of progress and of faith, that he chiefly owes his hold upon the hearts and minds of men.

The question of Tennyson's rank as a poet is interesting, but it must be said frankly that for our present purpose it is comparatively unimportant. We are not so much concerned to know how great he is, or to decide whether or not he is to be ranked ahead of Wordsworth and Shelley, as we are to learn to appreciate him, to gain such an insight into his spirit and method, as will enable us to share in the delight and inspiration that he affords to so many. Still, the question is worth considering even though it may not be possible to settle it.

One thing is fairly clear — whatever may be the verdict of posterity as to Tennyson's actual or relative rank, he is distinctly representative of the age in which he lived. He was in the full current of the thought of the middle of the century. He partook of its scholarship, and caught the swing of its progressive

spirit, he was a sharer in its doubts and fears, its hopes and aspirations, and he has voiced the thoughts and feelings of the time as no other man has done. Other poets have perhaps reflected more accurately a single phase of the complex life and thought of the time, but no one has expressed so clearly and truly the deep underlying spirit of the age.

But while there is no doubt as to Tennyson's being representative of his age, the question of his lasting power, of his ultimate rank, is one that can be settled only by time. Any judgment that we may form now can be at best only tentative, and may be reversed in the years to come. And yet, in spite of this doubt as to the verdict of posterity, it seems reasonably certain that Tennyson will always hold a place among the greatest of our English poets. He attained a perfection of art that has hardly been equalled since Shakespeare; and he shows a loftiness of soul, a nobility of purpose, a grasp of mind, that have been surpassed in our literature only by Milton. Certainly no English poet, except possibly Shakespeare, has produced such perfect songs, so rich in melody and meaning, as the "Bugle Song" and "Crossing the Bar"; there has been no narrative poem in our language since the days of Milton that can compare with the "Idylls of the King"; and surely no poem in the long list of those that have added lustre to our English literature

has ever appealed so strongly to the deepest thoughts and feelings of the time as has "In Memoriam." When we consider, then, the exquisite art and lofty purpose to be found in all his work, when we consider the great mass of his poetic achievement, and the particular poems that stand out as preëminent in their respective classes, and when we consider the great effect and the broad influence that his poems have had both in England and America, we can feel no doubt that Tennyson is to be ranked as one of the world's great poets. And as we call over the roll of our poets since Shakespeare and Milton, and compare the achievements and the influence of each with those of Tennyson, we find ourselves wondering if posterity will not be forced to award him the third place in the list.

III. THE PRINCESS

This poem first appeared in 1847. A second edition was published in 1848, containing some slight changes. In the third edition, published in 1850, the alterations were more important; the six songs between the parts were inserted for the first time, many additions and changes were made in the poem itself, and the prologue and conclusion were decidedly altered. The "weird seizures" of the Prince were not mentioned in the early editions, but the passages relating to them

first appeared in 1851, in the fourth edition. The fifth edition was published in 1853, and this contained the text in its present form. A study of these changes is interesting as throwing light on a poet's methods, and on the steps by which he finally brings his work to a satisfactory state. The ordinary student, however, is concerned mainly, if not entirely, with the poem in its completed form, and in this edition, therefore, no consideration is given to the changes in the successive editions.

"The Princess" is a narrative poem in blank verse. It consists of seven parts, a prologue, and a conclusion. Each of the seven parts is supposed to be told by a different person, one of the party of students visiting at a country place. Between the parts are inserted songs supposed to be sung by the young ladies of the party. It is called a "medley," partly because of the combination of serious and burlesque in the poem, and partly because of the impossible juxtaposition of scenes and incidents of different centuries. The subject of the poem is the "woman question," and its purpose is to show the futility of attempting to alter the position of woman by the acquisition of knowledge, or of trying to combat the force of nature and of love. The story is that of a princess who establishes a college devoted to the advancement of woman, and within whose precincts no man is allowed to enter,

and of a prince, betrothed to her in infancy and in love with her portrait, who, with two companions, in feminine disguise, enters the college as a student, and thus seeks to win the love of the Princess. Strong in her purpose, she gives no sign of yielding, until at last a helpless babe rouses in her heart the first stirrings of that maternal love that is inborn in all women. The care of the Prince, who has been wounded, still further calls out the feminine side of her nature that had been so carefully hidden, and she finally yields completely, finding in wedded love, not the slavery that she had imagined, but the emancipation of herself and the fullest realization of the ideal of womanhood.

The story is interesting and delightful to read, but it is distinctly lacking in strength. It is impossible, and we cannot feel any sense of reality. There is a distinct lack of unity, and the combination of comic and serious, while cleverly made, still further deepens the feeling of unreality. There is too much that is obviously absurd and artificial for the story to leave any impression of strength. Clearly the merit of "The Princess" does not lie in the plot.

Nor are the characters very strongly drawn. The Princess is an unattractive sort of young woman, as she appears in the earlier part of the story, beautiful and clever, it is true, but haughty, imperious, self-willed — one wonders how the Prince could be so

infatuated. Of course, she is drawn thus to show the developing power of love upon her nature. After the change she is very different, and it is said that Tennyson regarded her as his finest female character; but it must be confessed that in the later portrait she does not impress us with any strong sense of reality, and it is the earlier picture that remains with us. It can hardly be said that Tennyson was successful in carrying out his idea. The Prince is a pleasant, conventional lover, without any particular strength or attractiveness. This is, of course, necessary in order that the interest of the story may centre in the Princess, and that she may seem to be overcome by nature and by natural forces, rather than by the strength and attractiveness of her lover. But while this is good art, it does not add to our interest to have the hero so lacking in heroic qualities. Of the minor characters surrounding the two central figures, Lady Blanche is a strongly drawn unattractive woman, the "villain of the piece," and Cyril, the impulsive, rollicking young blade, who has, however, a sound foundation of principle and character beneath his trifling exterior, is perhaps the most real and human figure in the poem. The other principal characters are, like the Prince, distinctly negative. The contrast between the two kings, the one vigorous, masculine, self-assertive, the other timid, yielding, vacillating, is capitally

brought out, and the "genial giant Arac" is a delightful figure, but as a whole the characters are not especially well drawn or attractive. The charm of the poem is certainly not to be found here.

The lesson of the poem is strong and striking; the purpose is clear and well fulfilled. Tennyson aimed to show that it is a mistake for woman to attempt to secure equality with man by isolating herself from him, and that it is an error to suppose that knowledge by itself is sufficient to give leadership in the world. In other words, the difference between the positions of men and women is due not to differences of education or of opportunity, but to the essential difference, in the nature of things, between masculine and feminine. Tennyson did not hold that the position of woman was stationary or that she should not strive to advance, but he taught that her progress must be not in making herself like man, but in developing her own nature and her own individuality, and that the way to secure this progress was not by isolation and by trying to change the immutable laws of nature, but by coöperation and by working along the lines indicated by nature itself. The desired end was to be attained not by revolution or sudden change, but by steady progress in conformity with natural law. This was a lesson more needed when "The Princess" was published than it is to-day — Tennyson was in ad-

vance of his age, and, in a sense prophetic, — but the teaching is still true and the lesson still needed.

The purpose, then, is lofty, and the moral is a worthy one, but a poem is not a sermon, and it takes more than a moral to make a successful work of art. Unless the setting is worthy, and attractive of itself, the thought might better be set forth in prose. Nor is the teaching of "The Princess" sufficiently striking or novel or appealing, to interest by itself. The strength of the poem is not to be found in its moral.

That "The Princess" is a charming and delightful work is undeniable. We are forced to conclude, however, that the secret of its charm is not to be found in the story, in spite of its interest, nor in the characters, agreeable and attractive though they are, nor in the moral, although it is a noble and worthy one. The source of its fascination is to be found in the beauty of its details. It is like a magnificent mosaic, which pleases by its general effect of color and form, but the highest beauty of which is to be found in its exquisite perfection of detail. The distinguishing characteristic of the poem is beauty. The "Idylls" impress us by their loftiness of thought and splendor of style; "In Memoriam" stirs the deeper feelings and emotions of our hearts; "The Princess" appeals to our love of beauty.

It is not difficult to discover wherein this beauty

consists. We have seen that the excellence of Tenny son's art is to be found in his command of words, his skill in versification, and his power of description, and it is along these lines that we shall find the chief beauty of "The Princess."

The words of the poem are worth studying by themselves. The certainty which chooses just the right word, the judgment which uses archaic forms unearthed from some forgotten author, and the daring which does not hesitate to coin or compound a word on occasion are delightful. Still more remarkable is the adaptation of sound to sense, the selection of the kind of words that suit the meaning, or the sound of which suggests and emphasizes the idea that the author wishes to express. One has but to read aloud, with this thought in mind, two or three passages taken almost at random, to be impressed with the exquisite beauty of the language.

Nor is anything more than reading aloud necessary to realize the beauty of the versification. The metre is the most common in English literature — in fact, it may be called the standard English metre. When we remember that it is the measure of Shakespeare's plays, of "Paradise Lost," and of the "Idylls of the King," we realize with what skill it must be handled to produce so different an effect in "The Princess." The beauty of the verse lies in its exquisite modula-

tion, and in the skill with which it is varied to avoid monotony and to adapt the sound to the meaning. When the poem is read aloud, one is almost tempted to say that, if it told no story and had no higher aim, the music of the words and the rhythm of the verse were sufficient excuse for its being.

But the special beauty of the poem lies in the descriptions, in the pictures with which it abounds. It has been said that Tennyson's poetry is eminently pictorial, and nowhere is this quality more strikingly manifested than in "The Princess." All of the characteristics of his descriptions that have already been noted are to be found here — their abundance, their variety, their suggestiveness, their relation to the action of the story. They form backgrounds, they throw light on the characteristics and aims of the college and of the principal persons, and they are used constantly in figures and comparisons to bring vividly before us the object that is portrayed. Many of them are striking, most of them beautiful, many exquisitely so, and it is in this profuse abundance of beautiful pictures, more than in any other one thing, that the charm of "The Princess" is to be found.

The chief beauty of "The Princess" is in its descriptions, and yet, paradoxical as it may sound, the finest and most beautiful parts of the poem are not the pictures, but the songs. The statement is not as

paradoxical as it seems; for, while the songs are not descriptions, it will be found that an important element in their beauty is the picture suggested, rather than drawn, in each one. Unquestionably the best things in "The Princess" are "Tears, idle tears," "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height," and the songs that are sung between the parts of the poem. Those songs that separate the cantos are among the most perfect in our language, and they will live. There may come a time when "The Princess" will be forgotten, but as long as our tongue endures, they will be sung and remembered and loved.

Opinions are divided as to the merit of the poem as a whole. There are those who hold that it is professedly a "medley," that the lack of unity in plot and construction is a necessary result of its plan, and is not therefore a vital artistic defect. They claim that it has so admirably fulfilled its avowed purpose that it must fairly be called a great poem, a masterpiece. Opposed to this view are those who hold that this lack of unity, this confusion of jest and earnest, is fatal; that the poem must be counted a failure. The true judgment is probably to be found between the two extremes. The fact that it is a "medley," and lacking in unity and sustained power, rules it out from being called great. And yet it fulfils its purpose so well, and displays so much real power, that it

is very far from being a failure. It seems fair to conclude, then, that "The Princess," while not great, and although possessing serious faults and defects in construction, is still a fine work, and may perhaps be called a masterpiece, but that the secret of its charm and power is to be found not in its unity or strength as a whole, but in the surpassing beauty of its language, verse and descriptions.

IV. SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS

A few words of suggestion may assist the student in his reading of "The Princess." Remember that the object of your reading is appreciation, that is, understanding and enjoyment of the poem. Read it, therefore, for the sake of enjoyment. Do not go at it as a task, but read it as you would any interesting story. Only remember that while you may derive pleasure from even a careless reading, you will find far greater pleasure in a reading careful enough to reveal the beauties that lie beneath the surface.

Read the poem through once, rapidly, not stopping to look up words and allusions unless absolutely necessary to your understanding of the meaning. Then, having gained a general knowledge of the story and

of the character of the poem, read carefully the part of the introduction immediately preceding this, so as to get a clear idea of the purpose of the poem and of the points especially to be noted. You are now ready for the second reading, which should be done carefully and slowly, section by section.

In this reading, first of all make sure that you understand exactly what the poet says. The meaning of poetry does not always lie on the surface, and it is surprising how, carried on by the rhythm of the verse, one can read along, missing entirely the meaning of the words. You will find it a decided help in reading if you notice the paragraphs of the poem. Tennyson is almost the only English poet except Milton to master the art of paragraph structure, and his skill in this line makes "The Princess" much easier reading than it would be otherwise. If you bear in mind that, as a general rule, each paragraph deals with one main topic, and that this topic is usually indicated near the beginning of the paragraph, it will simplify your reading. Look up, in the dictionary, notes, or elsewhere, every word and allusion that you do not understand. Do not burden your memory by trying to remember their meanings independently, but try to fix in mind the meaning of the word or the force of the allusion in the particular passage in which it occurs. Try to find as many instances as you can of the happy choice

or use of words. Question yourself as to why Tennyson used a particular word or kind of word, and if you are in doubt as to whether he was right or not, try to substitute a better.

Watch the metre carefully. For this you need very little technical knowledge. "The Princess" is written in iambic pentameter; that is, a line regularly contains ten syllables with every second one accented. From this normal standard, however, there are frequent variations. The final vowel sound of one word is sometimes blended with the initial vowel sound of the following, and there are frequently a number of additional unaccented syllables in a line. In such cases every syllable is to be sounded, but the line is to be read in the same time as if it had only the ordinary number of syllables, the hurried effect usually being intended to suggest the idea of rapidly repeated action. Often the accent is shifted from the second to the first half-foot, generally to represent intermittent action. Sometimes this occurs at the beginning of a line, and the accented syllable is cut off from the rest of the verse by a pause so as to give an effect of peculiar emphasis. Remember that every such variation is intentional, and try to see its purpose. In this connection notice the melody of Tennyson's words as distinct from their meaning. Note especially his selection of open vowels and liquid

sounds, as well as his skilful use of alliteration, studying such lines as

> Laborious orient ivory, sphere in sphere,

and

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms.

The only way to appreciate the melody of language and verse is by reading aloud with careful attention to the rhythm, and it will well pay you, for the sake of the music as well as of the meaning, to memorize most of the songs, and some of the finest passages in the body of the poem.

Except the songs, the descriptions are the best parts of the poem. Watch them, then, carefully, noting especially two points: the way in which the mention of a few details brings before the mind's eye a finished picture, and the way in which the use of the descriptions aids the development of the poet's deeper purpose.

Keep the different characters distinct in your mind, observing the traits of each as shown in the descriptions of them and in their speeches. Of course, you will pay special attention to the Prince and Princess, but do not fail to notice also the contrasted pairs, Blanche and Psyche, Cyril and Florian, and the two kings.

The importance of one character you will not perceive unless it is pointed out to you, and even then you will probably not realize it at first. The babe is the central figure of the poem. The child is the true heroine of the piece, and it is the child's influence that shapes the action of the story. Read in this connection the first part of Tennyson's letter to Mr. Dawson, appended to this introduction, and then notice in the poem itself how it is the child that influences Ida, and really brings about the change in her. Observe also how the child is introduced at the critical points of the narrative so that the reader may not lose sight of it. A little thought will make clear to you the fact that the Princess was overcome and changed by the force of instinctive maternal love, roused in her by the helpless babe. This is the power that she failed to take into account when she planned her scheme, and this is the power that will render every scheme that ignores it futile.

This same idea — the power of love for the child — is emphasized in the songs between the parts, calling the mind back from the impossible aims of the Princess to the ideal of domestic love symbolized by the child. In the first song it is the memory of a dead child that reconciles a husband and wife. In the second the living child is the link that binds the heart of the absent father to his home. The theme of

the bugle song again is love, through which the influences of the soul roll on from generation to generation. In the fourth it is the thought of the loved ones at home that nerves the warrior in battle, while the fifth shows how in maternal love is found the source of courage to bear overwhelming sorrow. The sixth and last refers more closely than the others to the immediate context of the poem, and tells of the yielding of a maiden to the love that is the theme of all the songs and of the whole work. It is this dominant idea, running through the songs and symbolized in the child, that more than anything else gives unity and harmony to the whole poem.

Now, having studied "The Princess" somewhat in detail, you are better prepared to enjoy it as a whole. You see the dominant purpose underlying the poem, and that, in spite of the complexity and confusion, this idea gives unity to the whole; you see the varied beauty of language, verse and description, and realize that the effect of the whole is produced by the masterly blending of these details. It will be strange now if, when you read the poem a third time, you do not find the time and labor expended in your study more than paid for by the greater pleasure in your reading. At the same time you will have gained an increased power to appreciate and to enjoy all poetry.

For those who wish to study Tennyson and his work more fully, a few words as to the most helpful books may be of service. The standard biography, of course, is the magnificent *Life*, in two large volumes, by his son Hallam (Macmillan). This is an intensely interesting and valuable work, but rather voluminous. Arthur Waugh's *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Study of his Life and Work* (U. S. Book Co.) is an admirable book for the young student. It gives a clear insight into the poet's personality, and contains just and appreciative comment on his work. Dr. Henry Van Dyke's little book of essays, *The Poetry of Tennyson*, is very suggestive and interesting, and is an admirable piece of critical work. The two last-named books are perhaps the best for the general reader, and will probably furnish him with all that he needs. Other valuable books are Dixon's *A Tennyson Primer* (Dodd, Mead & Co.), and Stopford Brooke's *Tennyson, his Art and Relation to Modern Life* (Putnam). An admirable criticism of the poet is to be found in Stedman's *Victorian Poets* (Scribner), and there are essays without number.

"The Princess" has been edited and annotated many times and in varying degrees of excellence. Most of these editions owe a great deal to S. E. Dawson's *A Study of The Princess*, a most valuable and suggestive book, but published in London and difficult to

obtain in this country. For a study of the changes in the text made in the successive issues of "The Princess," Rolfe's edition (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is probably the most convenient.

There are "books and books" about Tennyson, and some of them are helpful; but to know and enjoy and appreciate him, only one volume is necessary — his *Works*. The more you read his poems the better you will understand them, and the better you understand them the more you will enjoy them.

V

The following interesting and suggestive letter was written by Tennyson to Mr. S. E. Dawson after the publication of the latter's excellent book, *A Study of The Princess*.

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, NOV. 21st, 1882.

Dear Sir, — I thank you for your able and thoughtful essay on "The Princess." You have seen, amongst other things, that if women ever were to play such freaks the burlesque and the tragic might go hand in hand.

I may tell you that the songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem — again, I thought, the poem will explain itself, but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and

inserted them. You would be still more certain that the child was the true heroine if, instead of the first song as it now stands,

As thro' the land at eve we went,

I had printed the first song which I wrote,

The losing of the child.

The child is sitting on the bank of a river, and playing with flowers — a flood comes down — a dam has been broken thro' — the child is borne down by the flood — the whole village distracted — after a time the flood has subsided — the child is thrown safe and sound again upon the bank and all the women are in raptures. I quite forget the words of the ballad, but I think I may have it somewhere.

Your explanatory notes are very much to the purpose, and I do not object to your finding parallelisms. They must always recur. A man (a Chinese scholar) some time ago wrote to me saying that in an unknown, untranslated Chinese poem there were two whole lines of mine, almost word for word. Why not ? are not human eyes all over the world looking at the same objects, and must there not consequently be coincidences of thought and impressions and expressions ? It is scarcely possible for any one to say or write anything in this late time of the world to which, in the rest of the literature of the world, a parallel could not somewhere be found. But when you say that this passage or that was suggested by Wordsworth or Shelley or another, I demur, and more, I wholly disagree. There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these

down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, *e.g.*

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight.

Suggestion :

The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, tho' now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon was behind it.

A great black cloud
Drag inward from the deep.

Suggestion :

A coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon.

In the "Idylls of the King"

with all
Its stormy crests that smote against the skies.

Suggestion :

A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea.

As the water-lily starts and slides.

Suggestion :

Water-lilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind, till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks — quite as true as Wordsworth's simile and more in detail.

A wild wind shook —
follow, follow, thou shalt win.

Suggestion :

I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and —

Shake the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.

The wind, I believe, was a west wind but, because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south and, naturally, the wind said "follow." I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me, tho', of course, if they occur in the "Prometheus," I must have read them.

I could multiply instances, but I will not bore you, and far indeed am I from asserting that books, as well as Nature, are not, and ought not to be, suggestive to the poet. I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Virgil or Milton where they adopt the creation of a bye-gone poet, and reclothe it, more or less, according to their own fancy. But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, bookworms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who impute themselves to the poet, and so believe that he, too, has no imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say "Ring the bells," without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sydney — or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean "roars" without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it (fact!).

I have known an old fish-wife, who had lost two sons at sea, clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day and cry out — "Ay! roar, do! how I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!" Now if I had adopted her exclamation and put it into the mouth of some old woman in one of my poems, I dare say the critics would have thought it original enough, but would

most likely have advised me to go to Nature for my old women and not to my own imagination; and indeed it is a strong figure.

Here is another little anecdote about suggestion. When I was about twenty or twenty-one, I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among these mountains before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet, I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words —

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.

When I printed this a critic informed me that "lawn" was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall, and graciously added, "Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre, but to Nature herself for his suggestions." — And I had gone to Nature herself.

I think it is a moot point whether — if I had known how that effect was produced on the stage — I should have ventured to publish the line.

I find that I have written, quite contrary to my custom, a letter, when I had merely intended to thank you for your interesting commentary.

Thanking you again for it, I beg you to believe me

Very faithfully yours,

A. Tennyson.

P.S. By-the-bye, you are wrong about "the tremulous isles of light": they are "isles of light," spots of sunshine coming through the leaves, and seeming to slide from one to the other, as the procession of girls "moves under shade."

And surely the "beard-blown" goat involves a sense of the wind blowing the beard on the height of the ruined pillar.

THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad ° lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighbouring borough with their ° Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter too, — with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
° Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the ° Abbey-ruin in the park,

Huge ° Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
° Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan ° crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefather's arms and armour hung.

And "this" he said "was Hugh's at ° Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at ° Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him" — which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had ° beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O ° miracle of women," said the book,
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,

Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost —
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, ° sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing, now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or ° steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For ° azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
° Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls
A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that sport
Went hand in hand with Science; ° otherwhere
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd
And ° stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead

The broad ° ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with ° bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time;
And long we gazed, but ° satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
Of finest ° Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm ° of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbour seats: and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them: then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, unworthier, told

Of college: °he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the °Master, as a rogue in °grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
My book to mind: and opening this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now
Such women, but °convention beats them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than that:
You men have done it: how I hate you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children! O I wish

That I were some great princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught;
We are twice as quick!" And here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty °gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,
However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
"That's your light way; but I would make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,

And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They °lost their weeks; they vext the souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
"We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again!" he said.
"Come, listen! here is proof that you were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to °read;
And there we took one tutor as to read:
The hard-grain'd °Muses of the cube and square

Were out of season: never man, I think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
For while our °cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In °wassail; often, like as many girls —
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —
As many little trifling Lilias — play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these — what kind of tales did men tell men,
She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips:
And Walter nodded at me; "*He* began,
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?
°Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"
Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the maiden Aunt.
"Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the place,
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!"
Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
With colour) turn'd to me with "As you will;
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamour'd he,
"And make her some great Princess, six feet high,
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!"
"Then follow me, the Prince,"
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream. —

Heroic seems our Princess as required —
But something made to suit with Time and place,
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
For which the good Sir Ralph had ° burnt them all —
This *were* a medley! we should have him back
Who told the °'Winter's Tale' to do it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space."
So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

I

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he °cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had °weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-°Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy."
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
°Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
But my good father thought a king a king;
He cared not for the affection of the house;
He held his sceptre like a °pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
For judgment.
Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
To one, a neighbouring Princess: she to me
Was °proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
A present, a great labour of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
He said there was a compact; that was true:
But then she had a will; was he to blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

°That morning in the presence room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and °cook'd his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,

May rue the bargain made." And Florian said:
"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."
And Cyril whisper'd: °"Take me with you too."
Then laughing "what, if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here:" but "No!"
Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town;
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
In the green gleam of °dewy-tassell'd trees:
What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
Proud look'd the lips: but while I meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,

And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the °silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
To hear my father's clamour at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window shake the night;
But all was quiet: from the °bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost
To a livelier land; and so by °tilth and grange,
And vines, and °blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the °mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, °without a star,
Not like a king: three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. "You do us, Prince," he said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
"All honour. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony —
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart: but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our banquets rang;
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
To hear them: °knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,
As children; they must lose the child, assume
The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful; odes
About this losing of the child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
And they that know such things — I sought but peace;
No critic I — would call them masterpieces:

They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,
A certain summer palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it: and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
We know not,—only this: they see no men,
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since
(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope
We dropt with evening on a rustic town

Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the °liberties;
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low °sibilation, stared
As blank as °death in marble; then exclaim'd
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
"Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
The king would bear him out;" and at the last —
The °summer of the vine in all his veins —
"No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had past that way; he heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave:
And he, he reverenced his liege-lady there;
He always made a point to post with mares;
His daughter and his housemaid were the °boys:
The land, he understood, for miles about
Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs" —
But while he jested thus,

A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three °presented Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In °masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a °sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, °holp
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of °clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of °Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps °blazon'd like Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which °gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were °tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"
One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,
°In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

"'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd:

The seal was °Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head °Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with °muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

II

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress came:
She brought us °Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited: out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that °sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
°Compact of lucid marbles, °boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The °Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
And so much grace and power, breathing down

From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her °height, and said:

"We give you welcome: not without °redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
And that °full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?"
"We of the court," said Cyril. "From the court"
° She answer'd, "then ye know the Prince?" and he:
"The climax of his age! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal:" she replied:
"We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the °child. Indeed,
We dream not of him: when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling

The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we °conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up, and read the °statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We °enter'd on the boards: and "Now," she cried,
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statues! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek °Odalisques, or oracles of °mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but °she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and °she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian °Artemisia strong in war,
The °Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
°Clelia, °Cornelia, with the °Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of °Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
°Convention, since to look on noble forms

Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
There sat along the °forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, °headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
°Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:

Then Florian, but no livelier than the °dame
That whisper'd "Asses' ears" among the sedge,
"My sister." "Comely, too, by all that's fair,"
Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she began.

°"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
Tattoo'd or °woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
°Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That °lay at wine with °Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the °Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just; till warming with her theme
She fulmined out her scorn of °laws Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to °chivalry:

When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more was more;
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, °Verulam; even so

With woman: and in arts of government
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant °Joan and others; arts of grace
°Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.
At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future; "everywhere
°Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on

In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried
"My brother!" "Well, my sister." "O," she said,
"What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!"
"No plot, no plot," he answer'd. "Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
°LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?"
"And if I had," he answer'd, "who could think
The softer °Adams of your Academe,
O sister, °Sirens tho' they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?"
"But you will find it otherwise," she said.
"You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow
Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess." "Well then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a °weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones;
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind."

"Let me die too," said Cyril, "having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche."
I struck in:
"Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came."
"O Sir, O Prince, I have no country; none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not °mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls."
"Yet pause," I said: "for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a °garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge

Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir — and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his °beetle brow
°Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he °bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian added; "she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple °fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
I would be that for ever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,

And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these and I."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
"The mother of the sweetest little maid,
That ever crow'd for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play
The °Spartan Mother with emotion, be

The °Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The °secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—
Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed us: promise all."

What could we else, we promised each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced
A °to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
"I knew you at the first: tho' you have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death

My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?"
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the °gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
"I brought a message here from Lady Blanche."
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's °colour) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as °fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, "Ah — Melissa — you!
You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon me!

I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death."
"I trust you," said the other, "for we two
Were always friends, none closer, °elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The °Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honour, these their lives." "Ah, fear me not"
Replied Melissa; "no — I would not tell,
No, not for all °Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That °Sheba came to ask of Solomon."
"Be it so," the other, "that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
(Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more." He said not what,

But "Thanks," she answer'd, "Go: we have been too
long
Together: keep your hoods about the face;
They do so that °affect abstraction here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist,
And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.
And then we stroll'd
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration: follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous Epic °lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all

That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the °frame, the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke:
"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."
"They hunt old trails" said Cyril "very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?"
"Ungracious!" answer'd Florian; "have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd
The °trash that made me sick, and almost sad?"
"O trash," he said, "but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,

The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer's °malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. °I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are °castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth,
And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose

A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came: but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!"
And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair
In colours gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits
Pierc'd thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some °Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with professors: they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with °inmost terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.
At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one

In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that:
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some °hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
Was passing: what was learning unto them?
They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;
Men hated learned women: but we three
Sat muffled like the °Fates; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel bells
Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
Six hundred °maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
°While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The °work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labours for the world.

III

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
  Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
  Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

[D]Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled °Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you may!
My mother knows:" and when I ask'd her "how,"
"My fault" she wept "my fault! and yet not mine;
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not, or seldom used;
Hers more than half the students, all the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you:
Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.
'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls?—more like men!' and at these words the snake,
My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
'O marvellously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men

You need not set your thoughts in °rubric thus
For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: 'men' (for still
My mother went revolving on the word)
'And so they are, — very like men indeed —
And with that woman closeted for hours!'
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
'Why — these — *are* — men:' I shudder'd: 'and you know it.'
'O ask me nothing,' I said: 'And she knows too,
And she conceals it.' So my mother clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?"
Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again: than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven"
He added, "lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, 'They mounted, °Ganymedes,
To tumble, °Vulcans, on the second morn.'

But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough : " and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. " Tell us," Florian ask'd,
" How grew this feud betwixt the right and left."
" O long ago," she said, " betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden ; 'tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;
And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida : they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) °inosculated ;
°Consonant chords that shiver to one note ;
One mind in all things : yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love :
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :
But I must go : I dare not tarry," and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand way: being herself
Three times more noble than three score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for °her, and her,
°Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but — ah she — whene'er she moves
The Samian °Herè rises and she speaks
A °Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high

Above the empurpled °champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried;
"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear °prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there
At °point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your °example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True—we had °limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.

But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,
'So puddled as it is with favouritism.'
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
°Wink at our advent: help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The °dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder:" then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved °platans of the vale.

Agreed to this, the day fled on thro' all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame °leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh

Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long °retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills. 18c

I rode beside her and to me she said:
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yesternorn;
Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to her,"
I answer'd, "but to °one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say."
"Again?" she cried, "are you ambassadresses
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have wish'd —
"Our king expects — was there no precontract? 19c
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read — no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
"And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
O °Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas your Highness °breathes full East," I said,
"On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this °gray preëminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it? think;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;

Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For °issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,
"Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.
Children — that men may pluck them from our hearts,
Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —
O — children — there is nothing upon earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err; nor would we work for fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one °POU STO whence afterhands
May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal °flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
We are used to that: for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle °taboo,
Dwarfs of the °gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof —
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act

Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to °spring against the pikes,
Or down the °fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breath of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some °vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." °"Dare we dream of that," I ask'd,
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits °Diotima, teaching him that °died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are °schools for all." "And yet" I said
"Methinks I have not found among them all
One °anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth

We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that °carve the living hound;
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this °microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
°Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter °hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet" I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
"To linger here with one that loved us." "Yea,"
She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the °Elysian lawns,
Where paced the °Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun:" then, turning to her maids,
"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair °Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd there
The bearded °Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side: but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Pysche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set

In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of °shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

IV

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

"There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
If that °hypothesis of theirs be sound"
Said Ida; "let us down and rest;" and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every °coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below
No bigger than a glowworm shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the °inner. Once she lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and °gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to us: lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:" and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,

In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess, "If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should °cram our ears with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,

But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
Toward that great year of equal mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden: let the past be past; let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough °kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the °beard-blown goat
°Hang on the shaft, and the °wild figtree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle, °burns
Above the unrisen morrow:" then to me,
"Know you no song of your own land," she said,
"Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the hues
Of promise; not a °death's-head at the wine."

Then I remember'd one myself had made,
What time I watch'd the °swallow winging south
From mine own land, part made long since, and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

"O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

"O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

"O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the °Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant; for still my voice
Rang false: but smiling "Not for thee," she said,
"O °Bulbul, any rose of °Gulistan
Shall burst her veil: °marsh-divers, rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this
A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight: they mind us of the time
When we made °bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul! I had a maid of honour once;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
A rogue of °canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
°Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
The passion of the prophetess; for song
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth

Of spirit than to junketing and love.
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this
°Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
Cyril, °with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear, Sir" I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;

There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamour'd "Flee the death;" °"To horse,"
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!"
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from °glow to gloom:
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch
°Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens °glimmeringly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms; they cried "she lives:"
They bore her back into the tent: but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, °Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were °valves
Of open-work in °which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the °Bear had wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she"
But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he said,
"They seek us: out so late is °out of rules.
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
"How came you here?" I told him: "I," said he,
"Last of the train, a °moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half sick at heart, return'd.
Arriving all confused among the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, crouch'd behind a °Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
Easily gather'd °either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;

She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
What, if together? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
Tho' °smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the waterlily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names:"
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
To °thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind

And double in and out the °boles, and race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That clasp't the feet of a °Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They °haled us to the Princess where she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the °mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river; and close behind her stood
Eight °daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women °blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,
And labour. Each was like a °Druid rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and °wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing °clove
An advent to the throne: and therebeside,

Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:
I led you then to all the °Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother: those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend: you began to change —
I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,
To me you froze: this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,

When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
In us true growth, in her a °Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
What student came but that you °planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her; *they* endured,
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche:" you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less °grain than touchwood, while my honest heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I that have lent my life to build up yours,
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
And talent, I — you know it — I will not boast:
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, "Good:
Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
"The plan was mine. I built the nest" she said,
"To hatch the °cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A °Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A °woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow

And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the °rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read — two letters — one her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus:
"You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:
Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:
Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women °kick against their Lords
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole."
So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida rang the woods;
The leader wildswan in among the stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of °glowworm light
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
Sphered up with °Cassiopëia, or the enthroned
°Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of °abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this °frequence can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre: let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town
And °landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The °dwarfs of presage: tho' when known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,

I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
The °seal does music; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life; O more than poor men wealth,
Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half
Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves
You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam:
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gather'd together: from the °illumined hall
Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not; till a clamour grew
As of a new-world °Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the °crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

"What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: *I* dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?

Peace! there are those to °avenge us and they come:
If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, °protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you: but for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, °turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,

When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she °floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —
Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —
Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —
I wed with thee! *I* bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should °lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone: we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and °address'd
Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.
This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one

To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
"Sir Ralph has got your colours: if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me?"
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb

Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. "Fight" she said,
"And make us all we would be, great and good."
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favour, and assumed the Prince.

V

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
We stumbled on a °stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace" I.
"The °second two: they wait," he said, "pass on;
His Highness wakes:" and one, that clash'd in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.
Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisping of the °innumerous leaf and dies,

Each °hissing in his neighbour's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamouring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded °Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides "King, you are free!
We did but keep you surety for our son,
If this be he, — or a draggled °mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunters in the °sludge:"
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the °sheath,
And all one rag, disprinced from head to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,
He has been among his shadows." "Satan take
The old women and their shadows! (thus the King
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.
Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink

From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and °transient in a trice
From what was left of faded °woman-slough
To sheathing splendours and the golden scale
Of °harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us.
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak, nor stir."
He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay:
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he whisper'd to her,
"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
What have you done but right? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I:
"Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me?" She heard, she moved,
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my friend—
Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say

The child is hers — for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother: O my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child:
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me
Who gave me back my child?" "Be comforted,"
Said Cyril, "you shall have it:" but again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts

With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at °parle: and "Look you" cried
My father, "that our compact be fulfill'd:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war."
Then Gama turn'd to me.
"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl: and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:
How say you, war or not?"
"Not war, if possible,
O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled °year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster: now she °lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
By gentleness than war. I want her love.

What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into °shards with catapults,
She would not love; — or brought her chain'd, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this
I would the old God of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world °mammoth bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake
My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
That °idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
They love us for it, and we ride them down.
Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes

With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
Among the women, snares them by the score
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand — gentleness
To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a °cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it."

"Yea but Sire," I cried,
"Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
What dares not Ida do that she should prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
°Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,
True woman: but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,

Glorifying clown and °satyr; whence they need
More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
Not like the °piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been °mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense"
Said Gama. "We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:

But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it. —
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
We would do much to gratify your Prince —
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor °buss'd the milking-maid,
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition."
Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand °rings of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their °Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamour: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such °thews of men: the midmost and the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy °Giant's zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery °Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their °morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all:
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

"Our land invaded, °'sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
But then this question of your troth remains:
And there's a downright honest meaning in her;
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me — I myself,

What know I of these things? but, life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me swear it —
'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candle-light —
Swear by °St. something — I forget her name —
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:
If not, the °foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will."

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat "Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,

And sharp I answered, touch'd upon the point
Where idle boys are °cowards to their shame,
" Decide it here: why not? we are three to three."

Then spake the third " But three to three? no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honour: every captain waits
Hungry for honour, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled die."
" Yea," answer'd I, " for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds — this honour, if ye will.
It needs must be for honour if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to her,"
Said Arac, " worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the word."

" Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her °false daughters in the pool; for none

Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say:
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial °flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd:
He batter'd at the doors; none came: the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd

His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the lads:
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur:
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze °valves, emboss'd with °Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

"O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we heard
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a °scourge;
Of °living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead °despots; and of those,—
Mothers,—that, all °prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men: the old leaven leaven'd all:
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:
I stored it full of rich °memorial:
I fenced it round with gallant °institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for their sport!—
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd

In honour — what, I would not aught of false —
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever: fail you will not. Still
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well; strike and strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the aftertime,
Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this °gad-fly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the °Time,
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins,
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast °over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.

"See that there be no traitors in your camp:
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust
Since our arms fail'd — this °Egypt-plague of men!
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I think
Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:
She shall not have it back: the child shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning: there the tender orphan hands
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunderstorms,
And breed up warriors! See now, tho' yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of all;
Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:

Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the °gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell
Mix with his hearth: but you — she's yet a colt —
Take, break her: strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd
She might not rank with those detestable
That let the °bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like °potherbs in the street.
They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause "take not his life:"
I mused on that °wild morning in the woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win:"
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,

And how the strange betrothment was to end:
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows and should fall;
And like a flash the weird affection came:
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream:
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs °bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept their seats:
Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew:
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere
He rode the °mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain, — brand, mace, and shaft, and shield —
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
The mother makes us most — and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statue-like,
Between a cymbal'd °Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she
No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave
Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came

As comes a °pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

VI

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
  Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
  Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
  Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
  Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
  Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
  "Sweet my child, I live for thee."

My °dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque

And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great °dame of Lapidoth she sang.

°"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand:
They mark'd it with the °red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

"Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

"And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
°Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of °Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,

Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them went
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately °fretwork to the Sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd;
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said "You shall not lie in the tents but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,

Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of °grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
"He saved my life: my brother slew him for it."
No more: at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the °painting and the tress,
And held them up: she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:
And then once more she look'd at my pale face:
Till understanding all the foolish work
Of °Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
"O Sire," she said, "he lives: he is not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace: we will tend on him
Like one of these; if so, by any means,

To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said: but at the happy word "he lives"
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden °brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamouring out "Mine — mine — not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the child"
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst

The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd
Or self-involved; but when she °learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.
What would you more? give her the child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
Win you the hearts of women; and beware

Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
The common hate with the revolving wheel
Should drag you down, and some great °Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
Or own one °port of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
Give *me* it: *I* will give it her."

He said:
At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,

Pledge of a °love not to be mine, farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the °dead prime: but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd it: then—
"All good go with thee! take it Sir," and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

"We two were friends: I go to mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac. "Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior: I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see
it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
She said you had a heart — I heard her say it —
'Our Ida has a heart' — just ere she died —
'But see that some one with authority
Be near her still' and I — I sought for one —
All people said she had authority —
The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as °Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,

I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroïd and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well — no heart have you, or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."
So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long.
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water: then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds. "O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wish'd it — but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with death,
When your skies change again: the rougher hand
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.
"Come hither,
O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me, come,
Quick while I melt; make reconcilement sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:
Come to the hollow heart they slander so!
Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!

I seem no more: *I* want forgiveness too:
I should have had to do with none but maids,
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why? — why? — Yet see,
Before these kings we embrace you yet once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.
And now, O sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have
Free °adit; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
What use to keep them here — now? grant my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling ev'n as they are."
Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
"Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him
Of your great head — for he is wounded too —

That you may tend upon him with the Prince."
"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,
"Our laws are broken: let him enter too."
Then Violet, °she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,
"I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
We break our laws with ease, but let it be."
"Ay so?" said Blanche: "Amazed am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease
The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out; but these men came to woo
Your Highness — verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye:
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,

Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult but are gone."

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words: nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great °cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear: but in the centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes; amazed

They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendour out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.
Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing °ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
And others otherwhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

VII

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond; when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
At first with all confusion: by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws:
A kindlier influence reign'd; and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they talk'd,
They sang, they read: till she not fair began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro

With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke: but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous °leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field: °void was her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from °verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and °tarn by tarn
Expunge the world: so fared she gazing there;
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
And waste it seem'd and vain; till down she came,
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering °gyres, but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:

And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft,
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favour: here and there the small bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair °charities
Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good name;
Not tho' he °built upon the babe restored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent °involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own, now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,

And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
"You are not Ida;" clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which seem'd a truth:
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the °dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver tongues —
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek —
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the °Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
°Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
A train of dames: by °axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the °wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seem'd: I moved: I sigh'd: a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,

Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

"If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd; she paused;
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry;
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould °that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love;
And down the streaming crystal dropt; and she

Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

"Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

"Now lies the Earth all °Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

"Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

"Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me."

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the °sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the °silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; °azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labour'd; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labour was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet she was but a girl —
"Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs."

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a °change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

"Blame not thyself too much," I said, "nor blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of °Lethe scales with man
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands —
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her —
Will clear away the °parasitic forms

That seem to keep her up but drag her down —
Will leave her space to °burgeon out of all
Within her — let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undevelopt man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev'n as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:

Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!"
Sighing she spoke "I fear
They will not."
"Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life."
And again sighing she spoke: "A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

"But I,"
Said Ida, tremulously, "so all unlike —
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts: they well might be: I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
You cannot love me."

"Nay but thee" I said
"From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild,
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
The words are mostly mine; for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
"I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically!"
So pray'd the men, the women: I gave assent:
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia first:
The women — and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,

Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
She flung it from her thinking: last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
"You — tell us what we are" who might have told,
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;

The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

"Look there, a °garden!" said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, "and °there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' °barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream

As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the °go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-hoaks,
Among six boys, °head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of °pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A °quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest — now address'd to speech —

Who spoke few words and pithy, such as °closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching °rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the °bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

NOTES[1]

PROLOGUE

2. **Lawns.** "An open space in a forest or between or among woods; a glade." — *Century Dictionary*. The description is of an English country gentleman's park, not of a closely-mown grass-plat.

5. **Institute.** A sort of social and literary club for the working people of the town.

11. **Greek.** Referring to the style of architecture. **Set with busts,** *i.e.* around the walls.

14. **Abbey-ruin.** Many of them remain in England, and they are sometimes, as here, preserved in private parks.

15. **Ammonites.** Fossil shells of spiral form, frequently armed with projecting spines, and chambered within like the shell of the nautilus. Formerly called *cornu Ammonis* (Ammon's horn). The Egyptian deity Amun was represented as having a ram's head with large curling horns; hence the name.

20. **Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere.** A series of carved ivory balls, one inside another. Note the music of the line, and the way in which it suggests the character of the thing it describes.

[1] References to the Notes are indicated in the text by the mark °.

21. **Crease.** More commonly spelled *creese* or *kris.* A Malay dagger.

25. **Agincourt.** A village in France where Henry V. defeated the French in 1415.

26. **Ascalon.** A city near Jerusalem; the scene of several battles during the crusades.

34. **Beat.** Poetic form for *beaten.*

35. **Miracle of women.** Wonder among women.

55. **Sown . . . with holiday.** Explain the figure.

63. **Steep-up.** A good Shakespearean word.

68. **Azure views.** Referring to the blue haze of the distance.

70. **Dislink'd.** It has been noted that Tennyson is fond of compounds with *dis-*, often using them in preference to the more common forms with *un-*.

80. **Otherwhere.** Tennyson uses many words, like this, that have practically dropped out of use since the time of Shakespeare and Milton, but that are forcible and effective.

82. **Stump'd the wicket.** Played cricket.

87. **Ambrosial.** Divinely fragrant.

87, 88. Note the alliterations in these lines.

90. **Satiated.** Accent on the first syllable, and short sound for the second *a.*

92. **Gothic lighter than a fire.** Contrasted with the more substantial but less aspiring, less suggestive, Greek architecture of the house.

92. **Of.** Caused by.

111–113. **He . . . he: one . . . another; proctor's dogs.**

The students in the English universities call the proctor's assistants "bulldogs." The proctor is a subordinate college officer charged with the maintaining of discipline.

116. **Master.** Head of a college. **Grain:** see dictionary.

128. **Convention.** Conventionality.

143. **Gowns.** The students of the English universities are required to wear black gowns at all university exercises. The "mortar-board" cap is also part of the costume.

161. **Lost their weeks.** To obtain a degree at Oxford or Cambridge a student must have been "in residence" for nine terms. A term is not counted unless he has been present at dinner a certain number of weeks. Irregularity of attendance, therefore, would prevent a term from being counted, and would postpone the time of receiving the degree. Roughly, "losing their weeks" is equivalent to being "dropped" in an American school or college.

176. **Read.** The English student says "read," where we say "study." We should hardly speak of "reading" mathematics.

178. **Muses of the cube and square.** Mathematics.

181. **Cloisters.** The covered walks or arcades around the inner sides of the college quadrangle.

184. **Wassail.** Drinking healths. What is the original meaning of the word?

199. **Chimeras.** Fabulous monsters. **Crotchets.** Curious fancies. **Solecisms.** Here extravagant tales. The poet's intention is evidently to prepare the mind for the improbabilities of the tale that is to follow.

229. **Burnt.** As witches.

231. Who "told the 'Winter's Tale'"?

The Prologue is an admirable preparation for reading the rest of the story. Not only does it bring one easily into the spirit of the poem — half bantering, half earnest, but it touches and foreshadows almost everything in the story. Bear this in mind and refer to it from time to time when reading.

I

7. **Cast no shadow.** Showing that he had sold his soul to Satan.

14. **Weird seizures.** These were not mentioned in the first edition of the poem, but, like the songs, were added later. Opinions are divided as to whether the poem is strengthened or weakened by the addition. As you read see whether you think that they are "injurious to the unity of the work."

19. **Galen.** A Greek physician. It was an old custom with physicians to carry a **gilt-head cane.**

23. **Half-canonized.** Regarded almost as a saint. To canonize is to place in the canon or list of saints of the Roman Catholic Church.

27. **Pedant's wand.** Schoolmaster's rod. The word *pedant* originally meant schoolmaster.

33. **Proxy-wedded with a bootless calf.** When it was impossible for the bridegroom to be present at the wedding ceremony he was sometimes represented by a "proxy," who acted as his substitute. As a part of the ceremony the proxy bared his leg as high as the knee. Such a proxy-wedding was valid and legally binding. In this particular case, however, the

Princess takes the ground that as at the time she was not of age to give consent, she could not be held to the contract. She was legally right in this position, and the ceremony amounted to nothing more than a betrothal of the children by their parents.

50–56. The characters of Cyril and Florian are here described in a few words. Note the difference between them, and see whether this difference is clearly marked throughout the story.

65. **Cook'd his spleen.** Brooded over or nursed his wrath. The spleen was regarded by the ancients as the seat of anger.

80. Is there any significance in the fact that Cyril's volunteering follows immediately the mention of the wealthy young widow?

93. **Dewy-tassel'd.** Hallam Tennyson says: "Hung with catkins as in the hazel-wood. It was spring-time."

100. **Silver sickle.** New moon.

106. **Bastion'd.** With ramparts at the top.

109. **Tilth.** Cultivated land. **Grange.** A farmhouse.

110. **Blowing bosks of wilderness.** "Uncultivated thickets blooming with wild-flowers" (Dawson). "Bosk" is akin to "bush." Note throughout the poem Tennyson's fondness for archaic words such as this.

111. **Mother-city.** Chief city or capital.

116. **Without a star.** Displaying no insignia of royalty.

134–135. **Knowledge . . . all in all.** Tennyson clearly regarded this as the Princess' great mistake. His own view is indicated by his words in "Locksley Hall:"

> "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers."

Again, in "In Memoriam" he says, speaking of knowledge:

"For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul."

170. **Liberties.** The college grounds within which the students could wander at will.

174. **Sibilation.** A hissing sound. More probably here a whistle or prolonged "whew."

175. **As death in marble.** *i.e.*, as a statue.

181. **The summer of the vine.** The warmth of the wine.

188. **Boys.** Postilions.

193. **Presented.** Represented.

195. **Masque or pageant.** Dramatic performances. Look up the exact meaning of each.

197–198. **A sight . . . with laughter.** The landlord or the three friends?

198. **Holp.** The old past tense of *help*. Another instance of Tennyson's use of archaic forms.

213. **Clocks and chimes, etc.** Dawson's comment on this passage is interesting: "The love of precise punctuality, so deeply implanted in the female breast, has full scope at last, as far as pretty clocks go. Everywhere are busts and statues and lutes, and such-like *bric-à-brac* aids to knowledge — promiscuously strewed about like blue china and crockery-ware bulldogs in a modern drawing-room. Instinctively the male reader shrinks through this part of the poem, fearful of upsetting something. Very properly also the path of knowledge, thorny to the tyrannous male, is made comfortable there. The ladies drink in science

Leaning deep in broidered down,

as is befitting. Everything matches in that university. No common pine — the professorial desk is of satinwood. Due attention is paid to dress also; the doctors are violet-hooded, and the girls all uniformly in white — gregarious, though, even there, as in the outer world. The Princess, her hair still damp after her plunge in the river, though sitting in indignant judgment upon the culprits, has yet a jewel on her forehead."

219. **Pallas.** Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

220. **Blazon'd.** On one globe was pictured the sky and on the other the earth.

226. **Gave.** Opened.

229. **Tutors.** At Oxford and Cambridge each student is placed under a tutor, who has the general supervision of his studies.

233–234. **In such a hand, etc.** In a sloping, running hand, the fashionable feminine writing of the day.

238. **Cupid.** The god of love, represented as blind.

239. **Uranian Venus.** The heavenly Venus, representing the higher or spiritual love.

244. **Muffled.** Shining through thin clouds.

II

The song is supposed to be sung by one of the women of the party, before the second of the men takes up the story. See Prologue, 236, also Part IV. of the Introduction.

2. **Academic silks.** College gowns.

8. **Sang.** Murmured, or rustled.

10. **Compact.** Solid. **Bossed.** Embossed, carved in relief.

13. **Muses and the Graces.** "The Muses, nine in number, Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomĕne, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania, Calliope, presided, each in her own province, over poetry, art, and science. They were of divine nature, and, with Apollo their leader, as the god of poetry, stand for the higher activities of human life as their spiritual patrons. The Graces, three in number, Euphrosyne, Aglaïa, and Thalia, were merely personifications of female beauty." (Woodberry.)

27. **Her height.** Parse.

28. **Redound.** Abundant return. Of rare use as a noun.

31. **That full voice.** Fame.

35. Although the Princess scorns the Prince, she has her full share of feminine curiosity in regard to him.

44. **Child.** See I., 136.

53. **Conscious of ourselves.** Embarrassed by the thought of their disguise.

55. **Statutes.** College rules.

60. **Enter'd on the boards.** Registered as students. An English college expression.

63. **Odalisques.** Female slaves of an Eastern harem. **Mode.** Fashion.

64. **She.** The wood-nymph Egeria, who was said to have given instructions to Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome.

65. **She.** Semiramis, the legendary Assyrian queen, who was said to have built Babylon.

67. **Artemisia.** Queen of Halicarnassus. She aided Xerxes in his expedition against Greece, fighting with great bravery at the battle of Salamis.

68. **Rhodope.** Rhodopis, an Egyptian woman, was said to have built a pyramid near Memphis. It was really, however, the work of another woman.

69. **Clelia.** A Roman girl who was given as a hostage to Porsena and escaped by swimming the Tiber on horseback. **Cornelia.** The famous Roman matron, daughter of Scipio Africanus, and mother of the Gracchi, "her jewels." **Palmyrene.** Zenobia, queen of Palmyra.

71. **Agrippina.** Another famous Roman matron, granddaughter of Augustus and wife of Germanicus.

72. **Convention.** See Prologue, 128, and note.

87. **Forms.** Benches.

94. **Headed like a star.** Hallam Tennyson says that this means "with bright golden hair."

96. **Aglaïa.** The name of one of the Graces; it means brightness.

97. **The dame.** Midas had his ears turned into those of an ass by Apollo. Ovid says that his barber, being sworn to secrecy and feeling that he must tell the story, whispered it into a hole in the ground. From this grew up a reed that told it to the world. Chaucer in his version substitutes the wife for the barber, and Tennyson follows the latter version.

101–104. These lines contain a most admirable summary of the "Nebular Hypothesis," which was formulated by the famous French astronomer, Laplace, not far from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

105. **Woaded.** The ancient Britons used to dye their bodies with the blue of the woad-plant.

112. **Appraised.** Praised. A rare use of the word. **Lycian**

custom. Herodotus says that the Lycians took their names from the mother instead of the father, and traced descent through the female line.

113. **Lay at wine.** Joined in the feasts, at which the guests reclined on couches. **Lar and Lucumo.** Etruscan titles of rank.

114. **Persian, Grecian, Roman.** What was the position of women in these nations?

117. **Laws Salique.** "Laws forbidding inheritance to pass through a female line. The reference is to one of the clauses in the Code of Laws of the Salian Franks, an early German tribe, among whom this prohibition was believed to have originated. . . . A quarrel on the application of this Law to the throne of France caused in 1337 the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War between England and France, Edward III. claiming the crown in right of his mother, Isabella, daughter of the late King Philip V., and Philip of Valois, the nearest heir by the male line, maintaining that the Law had always been extended to the kingdom of France." (Wallace.)

119. **Chivalry.** In mediæval times, when knighthood was an important factor in the social system, an exaggerated respect was paid to women.

144. **Verulam.** Lord Bacon. (Baron Verulam of Verulam.)

147. **Joan.** Joan of Arc.

148. **Sappho.** A famous Greek poetess. Only fragments of her work remain, but these are remarkable for their exquisite beauty, as well as for the strength of passion displayed in them.

156. **Two heads.** Man and woman

178. See I., 209.

180. Compare this use of "Adam" with that of "Galen." I., 19. **Academe.** Academy.

181. **Sirens.** By the beauty of their singing the sirens lured sailors to shipwreck on the rocks.

188–189. **Weasel . . . for warning.** Nailed to a barn-door as a warning to other weasels.

205. **Not mine.** Not her own master.

209. **Garth.** Garden.

222. **Beetle brow.** Projecting eyebrows.

223. **Sun-shaded.** The meaning is obscure. It may mean that the eyes were shaded from the sun by the projecting, shaggy eyebrows.

224. **Bestrode.** Stood over him to protect him.

230. **Fly.** Butterfly.

263. **Spartan mother.** It was part of the Spartan training to sacrifice natural feeling for the sake of the public good.

264. **Lucius Junius Brutus.** He put to death his two sons who had joined a conspiracy to restore the banished Tarquins to the throne.

269. **Secular.** Here used in an unusual sense. See dictionary.

282. **A to-and-fro.** A pacing back and forth.

295. **Gracious dews.** Tears.

304. **Colour.** Yellow was the color worn by Lady Blanche's pupils, as lilac was by Lady Psyche's.

305. **Fair.** Clear.

316. **Elm and vine.** As close as the elm and the vine that twines about it.

319. **Danaïd of a leaky vase.** The daughters of Danaus, for murdering their husbands, were punished in Hades by being compelled to carry water in sieves. The expression means, therefore, one unable to keep a secret.

323. **Aspasia.** A famous woman of remarkable intellectual power, who exercised great influence in Athens at the time of Pericles.

325. **Sheba.** The Queen of Sheba. See 1 Kings x. 1–13; 2 Chronicles ix. 1–12.

338. **Affect abstraction.** Pretend to be lost in thought.

353. **Lilted out.** Declaimed or intoned.

360. **Frame.** The human frame. Of this they learned only "something"; they did not go deeply into physiology. See III., 289–299.

372. **Trash,** etc. Florian is referring to Cyril's extravagant compliments to Lady Psyche.

388. **Malison.** Curse.

389–411. In connection with this speech of Cyril's, recall the description of him in I., 52–54.

392. **Castles.** See I., 73–78.

420. **Astræan age.** Astræa was the last deity to leave the earth at the close of the golden age, and it was believed that she would be the first to come back at its return. The meaning of the line is that the Princess was lost in a dream of some golden age for women in the future.

423. **Inmost.** Technical and obscure to the ordinary mind.

435. **Hid and sought.** Played hide and seek.

443. **Fates.** The three divinities, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who watched over and guided the destinies of men.

448. **White.** At Cambridge a white surplice is worn, instead of the black gown, at certain chapel services.

450–453. Four remarkable lines, strongly suggestive of Milton.

454. **The work of Ida.** Her composition.

III

1–2. A very beautiful description.

11. **Iris.** The rainbow. Here, of course, it means dark rings under the eyes.

34. **Set . . . in rubric.** In old manuscripts and in some modern books certain words are printed in red to make them conspicuous. The rubrics in the prayer-book are an example.

55. **Ganymedes.** Ganymede, a mortal, was taken to Olympus to be the cupbearer of the gods.

56. **Vulcans.** Vulcan was thrown out of heaven by Zeus, and was lame ever after. See *Paradise Lost*, I., 740–746.

73. **Inosculated.** Blent together into one.

74. **Consonant . . . note.** It may refer to the fact that when a chord is struck on one musical instrument the same chord on a neighboring instrument will vibrate also; or it may mean that "the notes . . . being chords, blend into one musical note, and the ear cannot separate the two sets of vibrations."

96. **Her, and her.** Lady Psyche and Melissa.

97. **Hebes.** Hebe was the cupbearer of the gods.

99. **Herê.** Juno, wife of Zeus. Samos was one of her favorite cities.

100. **Memnon.** A colossal statue in Egypt, said to be of Memnon, was reported to give forth a musical sound when touched by the rays of the rising sun.

104. **Champaign.** Level, open country.

111. **Prime.** Primeval.

115. **At point to move.** Just ready to start.

121. **Your example pilot.** An absolute clause. See II., 195.

126. **Limed.** Caught with bird-lime, a sticky substance smeared on trees to hold fast birds that light on it.

144. **Wink at.** Connive at, pretend ignorance.

154. **Dip.** The geological term for the downward slant of strata.

159. **Platans.** Plane-trees.

165. **Leopards.** See II., 19.

179. **Retinue.** Here accented on the second syllable, as in Milton and Shakespeare.

185. **One.** The Prince.

212. **Vashti.** See Esther i. 12.

215. **Breathes full East.** It may mean "breathes the spirit of the Eastern queen," or it may mean "like a harsh, east wind."

218. **Gray.** Old.

227. **Issue.** A legal term for children.

246. **Pou sto.** She refers to the famous saying of Archimedes, "Give me *where I may stand* (*pou sto*), and I will move the world."

251. **Flies.** Short-lived.

261. **Taboo.** In the South Pacific Islands a ban is placed upon certain persons or things, all intercourse with them or use of them being forbidden. This interdiction is called a taboo.

262. **Gynæceum.** The part of a Greek house reserved for the women.

269. **Spring against the pikes.** At the battle of Sempach, in 1388, Arnold von Winkelried rushed upon the Austrian line, and, gathering to his breast as many spears as he could grasp with his outstretched arms, made a gap through which his comrades rushed. In the Latin war (B.C. 340) Publius Decius Mus, having had it revealed to him in a vision that the leader of the army which was to be victorious would perish, sacrificed himself upon the spears of the enemy.

270. **Down the fiery gulf.** When the priests declared that the chasm which had appeared in the market-place at Rome would not close without a fitting sacrifice, Marcus Curtius leaped into it on horseback and in full armor.

277. **Some vast bulk.** Some extinct monster.

280. Dare we think of the Almighty as a workman who improves with practice?

285. **Diotima.** A priestess who is said to have instructed Socrates.

285–286. **That died of hemlock.** Socrates was condemned to death by drinking hemlock. This was the customary way of inflicting the death penalty at Athens.

288. **Schools.** Courses or departments; groups of studies giving a special training.

290. **One anatomic.** See note on II., 360.

293. **Carve the living hound.** Practise vivisection.

296. **Microcosm.** Little world; applied to the human body

298. **Encarnalize.** Make carnal, brutalize.

299. **Hangs.** Waits for decision.

324. **Elysian.** Elysium was the abode of the righteous after death.

325. **Demigods.** The name was first applied to mortals of divine descent, later to those heroes who had won by their bravery or other virtue the privilege of entering Elysium.

331. **Corinna's triumph.** Corinna was a Greek poetess who several times defeated Pindar in public poetical contests.

334. **Victor.** Pindar.

344–345. Different kinds of stone.

IV

2. **Hypothesis.** See II., 101–103.

5. **Coppice-feather'd.** Lightly fringed with foliage.

8. **The inner.** The inside. A curious use of the word.

17. **Gold.** Referring probably to the table furniture; it may possibly, however, refer to the wine.

47. **Cram our ears.** When Ulysses passed by the island of the Sirens, he filled the ears of his companions with wax so that they would not hear the fatal singing. He left his own

ears unstopped, but had himself bound to the mast, so that he could hear but not yield.

59. **Kex.** Hemlock.

60. **Beard-blown.** With his beard blowing in the wind.

61. **Hang on the shaft.** Hang on the ruined pillar as on a rock.

61. **Wild figtree.** The wild figtree is often spoken of by Roman poets as splitting rocks and buildings in its growth.

64. **Burns.** Glows with the reflected light of the sun not yet above the horizon.

69. **Death's-head.** Herodotus says that the Egyptians had a custom of bringing into their feasts a wooden image of a corpse to remind the banqueters of their inevitable end.

71. **Swallow winging south.** See III., 194.

100. **Ithacensian suitors.** During the twenty years that Ulysses was away from home in the Trojan war, his wife Penelope had many suitors. He returned unknown to the intruders, over whom Pallas cast an enchantment causing them to laugh nervously and unnaturally for no apparent reason — "with other men's jaws" — possibly as if they had a sort of presentiment of their doom. See *Odyssey*, Book XX.

104. **Bulbul.** Persian for nightingale. **Gulistan.** Persian for rose-garden.

105–106. **Marsh-diver . . . meadow-crake.** Birds with very harsh notes. Dawson quotes Wood as saying that the cry of the latter "may be exactly imitated by drawing a quill or a piece of stick over the large teeth of a comb, or by rubbing together two jagged strips of bone."

110. **Made bricks in Egypt.** When women were still in bondage to men, before the establishment of this refuge. See Exodus, i. 8–14; v. 7, 8.

117. **Canzonets.** Short songs of a light and airy character.

121. **Valkyrian.** The Valkyrs ("Choosers of the Slain") were Warrior Nymphs, sisters of Odin. They presided over the field of battle, selected those who were to be slain, and conducted them to Valhalla.

126. **Mock-Hymen.** Hymen was the god of marriage.

137. **With whom . . . wrought.** On whom the wine had taken effect.

148. Why does the Princess give orders to flee, instead of to seize and punish the offenders?

160. **From glow to gloom.** From the lighted tent.

162. **Rapt to the horrible fall.** Hurried toward the cataract.

172. **Glimmeringly.** It was after sunset.

183. **Caryatids.** Statues of draped, female figures used as pillars.

184. **Valves.** Folding gates.

185–188. **In which the hunter,** etc. The design on the gates represented Actæon, who, as a punishment for spying on Diana at her bath, was turned into a stag. He is evidently just undergoing the change — still "manlike" in form but with the antlers sprouting on his brow. The branching horns form spikes on the top of the gate.

194. **Bear.** The constellation of the Great Bear.

200. **Out of rules.** In the English Universities the under-

graduates are required to be inside the college gates before a certain hour.

203. **A moral leper.** Shunned and avoided as if he were a leper.

207. **Judith.** Judith, the Jewess, when her native city was besieged by Holofernes, went to the Assyrian camp, made a pretext for getting into the general's tent, and cut off his head as he lay asleep.

217. **Either guilt.** The guilt of both.

228. **Smock'd or furr'd and purpled.** Whether wearing the smock frock of the laborer, or the rich garb of the wealthy and noble.

242. **Thrid . . . the mazes.** Thread the narrow winding paths.

243. **Boles.** Tree-trunks.

250. **Mnemosyne.** The goddess of memory, mother of the Muses.

252. **Haled.** Dragged.

255. **Mystic fire.** "St. Elmo's Fire," which appears on the tips of masts under certain electrical conditions of the atmosphere.

259. **Daughters of the plough.** Peasant women.

260. **Blowzed.** Red and coarse of complexion.

261. **Druid rock.** The Druids were the priests of the early Britons. At Stonehenge and other places in England are pillars supposed to have been erected by the Druids.

263. **Wailed about with mews.** Surrounded by yelling gulls and sea-mews.

264. **Clove.** The old past tense of *cleave*.

275. **Castalies.** Castalia, or Castaly, was a mythical spring on Mount Parnassus, sacred to the Muses, and believed to give poetic inspiration to all who drank of it.

292. **Jonah's gourd.** That grew up in a night and withered as rapidly. See Jonah iv. 6–11.

296. **Planed.** Smoothed.

314. **Grain.** Strong, healthy wood. **Touchwood.** The name given to certain decayed wood used as tinder.

347. **Cuckoo.** Instead of building a nest for itself, the cuckoo lays its eggs in that of some other bird.

352. **Niobëan.** Because Niobe, queen of Thebes, boasted of her twelve children, Apollo and Artemis killed them all. The mother, weeping for them, was changed into a stone which still continued to mourn.

357. **Woman-post.** Courier or messenger.

366–367. **The rick flames.** During the troubles between the farm laborers and the landlords, from 1830 to 1850, it was not uncommon for the peasants to set fire to ricks of hay and to other produce.

393. **Kick against.** Revolt against.

415. **Glowworm.** Phosphorescent.

418. **Cassiopeia.** An Ethiopian queen, who after death was placed in heaven as a constellation.

419. **Persephonè.** The daughter of Ceres. She was stolen by Pluto, while she was gathering flowers, and was carried by him to Hades, where she became his queen. The meaning of these two lines is that the Prince would have found her whether she were in heaven or in hell.

420. **Of abeyance.** During which the marriage or betrothal was held in abeyance.

422. **Frequence.** Crowd; an unusual word, but found in Milton.

426. **Landskip.** The old form of *landscape.*

427. **Dwarfs of presage.** Less than had been foretold.

436. **The seal does music.** The seal is said to be strongly attracted by musical sounds.

456. **Illumined hall.** It was now after midnight.

466. **Babel.** See Genesis xi. 1–9.

473. **Crimson-rolling.** It is a red "revolving" light.

480. **Those to avenge us.** Referring to her brothers.

484. **Protomartyr.** The first martyr. Thus Stephen was the protomartyr of the Christian faith.

495. **Turnspits.** Meat was roasted by fixing it on a "spit" or pointed rod over the fire. The "turnspit," then, is the servant set to turn this rod. "Turnspits for the clown" means "servants for the boor."

505. **Floated.** What is the force of the word here?

523. **Lord you.** Address you as lord.

529. **Address'd.** Directed or turned.

INTERLUDE

The interlude marks a change in the character of the poem. Up to this point the tone has been largely that of

raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime.

Now it becomes more serious and earnest. The real purpose of the poem becomes more apparent. At the same time the principal characters become stronger and more consistent. Up to this point the Princess has been anything but attractive, and the Prince, while he has not been offensive, has impressed us as a neutral character, lacking in real strength. The Prince, perhaps, does not gain much in strength, but with the Princess there is a steady growth until at last the mask is thrown aside, and, by the power of an overmastering love, her true self stands revealed in all its beauty of noble womanliness.

V

2. **Stationary voice.** Of a sentinel.

4. **The second two.** Cyril and Psyche were the first two.

13. **Innumerous.** Innumerable.

14. **Hissing.** Whispering.

21. **Squire.** An attendant on a knight, who was preparing himself by such service to attain knighthood himself.

25. **Mawkin.** Kitchen-maid, or menial servant; here one who tends pigs.

26. **Sludge.** Mire.

28. **From the sheath.** Just opened.

37. **Transient.** Changing.

38. **Woman-slough.** Female garments. "Slough" means the skin cast off by a snake. When used in this sense the word rhymes with "enough." When, however, it means a miry hole, or morass, it rhymes with "bough."

40. **Harness.** Armor.

110. **Parle.** Parley, conference.

121. **Year.** Harvest.

125. **Lightens.** Flashes.

132. **Shards.** Fragments of brick and stone. **Catapults.** Contrivances used before the invention of gunpowder to hurl large stones.

142. **Mammoth.** A prehistoric colossal beast, the remains of which are sometimes found in northern countries.

146. **Idiot legend.** See I., 5.

162. **Cherry net.** It is quite common in England to protect fruit-trees from birds by covering them with light nets.

170. **Gagelike.** In the days of chivalry a knight used to challenge to combat by flinging down before his enemy his glove as a gage or pledge of battle.

179. **Satyr.** A mythological creature, half man, half goat.

190. **Piebald.** Spotted with different colors.

195. **Mooted.** Debated, questioned.

213. **Buss'd.** Kissed.

227. **A thousand rings.** As a new ring is added every year, this would make them a thousand years old.

229. **Valentines.** Songs or messages of love.

246. **Such thews of men.** Such strong men. "Thews" means muscles and sinews.

250. **Airy Giant's zone.** The belt of the constellation Orion.

252. **Sirius.** The dog-star.

254. **Morions.** Helmets.

266. **'Sdeath.** A contraction of *God's death*, referring to the Crucifixion. An old oath.

283. **St. something.** St. Catharine of Alexandria, who is said to have converted the fifty learned men sent by the Emperor Maxentius to turn her from Christianity.

287. **Foughten.** An archaic form of the participle.

299. **Cowards to their shame.** The words probably mean, "moral cowards afraid to face the shame of what would appear physical cowardice."

319. **False daughters.** Ducklings that have been hatched by her.

324. **Flush.** The word has two meanings, to "redden" and to "fill full." Either meaning might be applicable here.

355. **Valves.** Gates. **Tomyris.** The queen of the Massagetæ, against whom Cyrus made an expedition. She defeated and killed him, and then, dipping his head in a skin filled with blood, bade him, since he was so bloodthirsty, drink his fill.

368. **Scourge.** A former Russian custom.

369–370. **Living hearts . . . despots.** The Hindoo custom of burning the widow on the husband's funeral pyre.

371. **All prophetic pity.** According to Hindoo ideas a girl would be dishonored if not married before a certain age. To avoid this dishonor "prophetic pity" often impelled a mother to murder a daughter immediately after birth.

381. **Memorial.** Pictures, statues, etc.

382. **Institutes.** Laws and regulations.

404. **Gad-fly.** This temporary trouble.

405. **The Time.** The present age.

412–413. **Over all . . . morn.** Wallace paraphrases this passage thus: "Over all the regions that lie upon the circling surface of the earth from pole to pole."

417. **Egypt-plague.** Referring, of course, to the plagues sent upon the Egyptians as a punishment for Pharaoh's cruelty to the Children of Israel.

441. **The gray mare.** Referring to the old proverb, "The gray mare is the better horse."

448. **Bantling.** Child.

449. **Potherbs.** Vegetables.

460. **Wild morning.** See I., 90–100.

478. **Bare on.** Carried forward.

491. **Mellay.** An anglicized form of the French word *mêlée;* a confused conflict.

500. **Miriam.** The sister of Moses. After the passage of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's host she sang, to the timbrel, a song of triumph. See Exodus xv. 20–21. **Jael.** The woman who delivered the Jews from the oppression of Sisera by driving a nail into his temple as he lay asleep. See Judges iv. 17–21.

513. **Pillar of electric cloud.** A cyclone or tornado.

VI

1. **My dream had never died.** The trance had not passed away.

16. **Great dame of Lapidoth.** Deborah, wife of Lapidoth. The reference is to her song of triumph over Sisera. See Judges iv. 4, and v. 1–31.

17. The idea of the song is a comparison between the cause of woman and a tree.

25. **Red cross.** As a sign to the wood-cutters that it was to be felled.

47. **Blanch'd.** Marked with white; a day to be celebrated.

49. **Spring.** Blossoms, flowers.

70. **Fretwork.** His branching antlers.

88. **Of grisly twine.** Matted and tangled.

94. **The painting and the tress.** See I., 37, 38.

101. **Fancy.** Her whims.

118. **Brede.** Embroidery.

142. **Learnt.** Recognized.

158. **Nemesis.** The goddess of retribution.

166. **Port.** Portal, opening.

180. **A love not to be mine.** Wedded love.

186. **Dead prime.** The darkness before dawn.

224. **Lot's wife.** See Genesis xix. 26.

283. **Adit.** Access, entrance.

298. **She . . . song.** See IV., 21.

337. **Cats.** Her leopards.

352. **Ordinance.** Orders, directions.

VII

18. **Leaguer.** Camp.

19. **Void was her use.** "Her life was empty of its usual occupations." (Boynton.)

23. **Verge.** Horizon.

25. **Tarn.** Small dark pond.

31. **Gyres.** Circles.

50. **Charities.** Her care of the wounded.

60. **Built upon.** Based his suit upon.

67–68. **Involved in stillness.** Implied by silence.

88. **Dead.** Dead of night.

109. **Oppian law.** A sumptuary law, passed when Hannibal was threatening Rome, to restrict women in the use of ornaments, etc. When the crisis had passed the women rose in anger and forced its repeal in spite of Cato's resistance. **Titanic.** Colossal.

112. **Hortensia.** Daughter of the orator Hortensius. She spoke most eloquently and successfully in opposition to a tax levied on wealthy Roman matrons to defray the expenses of the war against Brutus and Cassius.

113. **Axe and eagle.** The emblems, respectively, of civil and military authority in the Roman Republic.

115. **Wolf's-milk.** Referring to the legend that Romulus and Remus were suckled by a wolf.

148. **That other.** Aphrodite (Venus) rising from the sea.

167. **All Danaë to the stars.** Open to their influence. The Princess Danaë was confined in a tower, to which Zeus gained admittance by taking the form of a shower of gold.

182. **Sparkling spire.** The sharp rocks of the Alps are meant.

189. **Silver horns.** "Horns" means mountain-tops, and "silver" refers to their appearance in the dim light of dawn.

201. **Azure pillars of the hearth.** Blue smoke from the cottages.

234. **A change.** The approach of morning.

245. **Lethe.** The river of oblivion ; whoever drank of it was forever after forgetful of his previous existence.

253. **Parasitic forms.** Conventionalities.

255. **Burgeon.** Burst forth into blossoms.

CONCLUSION

49. **There, a garden.** England.

50. **There.** France.

66. **Barring out.** The shutting out of a schoolmaster from his class-room by his pupils.

78. **Go-cart.** A frame on small wheels to support children while learning to walk.

83. **Head under head.** Each one a size smaller than the next.

87. **Pine.** Pineapples.

90. **Quarter-sessions.** A court held every three months for the trial of minor offences.

94. **Closed.** Included.

97. **Rookery.** Flight of rooks.

100. **Bourn.** Limit.

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